This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL
ANDOVER-HARVARD THEOLOGICAL
LIBRARY

From the collection
of the
UNIVERSALIST HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

THE

CHRISTIAN REMEMBRANCER,

OR

SHORT REFLECTIONS

UPON THE

FAITH, LIFE, AND CONDUCT,

OF

A REAL CHRISTIAN.

Of these things put them in remembrance.
2 Tim. ii. 14.

SECOND EDITION,

BY JONATHAN YOUMANS.

NEW YORK:

PRINTED BY SLEIGHT AND ROBINSON.

1830.

BV
4501
.S3
1830

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, ss.
BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the twenty-third day of September, Anno Domini 1830, in the fifty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America, Jonathan Youmans, of the said District, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

"The Christian Remembrancer, or short reflections upon the faith, life, and conduct of a real Christian.—Of these things put them in remembrance. 2 Tim. ii. 14. Second edition. By Jonathan Youmans."

In conformity to the act of Congress of the United States, entitled "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned." And also to an act, entitled "An act, supplementary to an Act, entitled An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

FREDERICK I. BETTS,
Clerk of the Southern District of New York.

PREFACE.

THIS little treatise is divided into three parts; the first of which relates chiefly to the word and work of God in the redemption of souls by Jesus Christ: the second, to the inward and practical experience of this redemption in the heart of the believer; and the third, to his outward converstaion and conduct with others.—The addresses to God, at the end of each part, may be read alone, or all together, in their order, as one prayer.

On this wide and great subject, the reflections, which might have been greatly multiplied, are brought into as narrow a compass as possible, being intended rather for hints to carry on the mind to farther meditations, than for full or exact meditations themselves.

As the author humbly believes, that he has had no other view in these reflections, which have employed some of his solitary hours, than the glory of a gracious God, and the edification of believers, he only requests, as one of the greatest favors he needs, that the pious reader will remember him, in return, before the throne of grace; that these things, of which he hath endeavored to put others in remembrance, may never be forgotten by him-

self, but be felt, experienced, and enjoyed, more and more. The acquisition of many prayers on this account from his Christian brethren is of such value and importance in his mind, as would make him a far higher compensation indeed, than he has a right to expect, for these humble labors, which need the mercy and favor of God, and the kindness and candor of every good man.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

	PAGE
On entrance into spiritual life,	9
The method of mercy,	11
The soul's difficulty in embracing mercy,	13
The nature and exercise of faith,	14
On communion with the divine persons in Jehovah,	16
On the incarnation of Christ, by which he become Immanuel,	18
On Christ's descent into Egypt	19
On the miracles of Christ,	21
On the word of Christ,	24
On the life of Christ,	28
On the death of Christ,	31
On the resurrection of Christ,	33
On the ascension of Christ,	35
On the glorification of Christ,	38
On the intercession of Christ,	39
The love of the Father,	41
The love of the Spirit,	43
The work of the Spirit,	45
On the equal obligation of believers to the three persons in Jehovah,	48
On the particular design and use of the several holy scriptures,	49
The recollection of this first part in prayer to God,	54

PART II.

Upon unbelief, ...
How have I received Christ, . . .
How do I live upon Christ, . . .
On self-seeking, ...
On the different appearances of grace in different persons, ...
On the difference of myself from myself, .
On bridling the tongue, . . .
Upon false appearances, . . .
On the spirit of the world, . . .
On the pride of the heart, . . .
Comparison between carnal and spiritual wisdom,
Upon independence, ...
On worldly grandeur, ...
On worldly company, ...
The manners of the world are hurtful and hindering to believers, ...
On conversation among professors, . .
On the changes of time, . . .
On the patient enduring of wrongs, . .
On prayer, ...
On singing praises to God, . . .
A Christian, in losing his life, saves it, .
On the opinion of carnal men, . .
On the esteem of good men, . . .
Weakness is impatient, . . .
On retirement, ...
On the fear of man, ...
On my own imperfections, . . .
The believer receives food, as well as light, in the word and doctrine of Christ, . .

On the spirit of scoffing, . . . 128
It is a great point of Christian wisdom to distinguish well between nature and grace, . 129
On temptations, ... 134
On adversity, ... 138
On prosperity, ... 140
Luxury indecent for Christians, . . 142
There are many first that shall be last, . 144
It is through grace that all ordinances are rightly used and become beneficial, . . 146
On the profitable hearing of the word, . 148
Upon declensions from God, . . . 155
On sobriety of spirit, ... 156
The heart must be given to God, . . 157
On liberty of soul, ... 158
Upon sickness, ... 159
Upon death, ... 162
The recollection of the second part in prayer to God, 165

PART III.

The real Christian loves his country, and is therefore the best of patriots, . . . 169
The real Christian is conscientiously a dutiful subject to the king and his government, . 171
The real Christian will punctually obey the laws of his country in every thing, not opposite to the will and word of God, . . . 173
How a real Christian should conduct himself towards the church of God, . . . 175
On the reciprocal duties of minister and people, 177
On quarrels among Christians, . . 180
On the marriages of real Christians, and their duties in that state, ... 182

On the duty of parents, . . .
On the duty of children, . . .
On the duty of Christian masters, . .
On the duty of Christian servants, . .
On the Christian's duty in his calling, .
That duties are not to be measured by the success which follow them, but by the word of God only,
On the deportment of a Christian to others, .
The Christian's conduct to the tempted and distressed in mind, ...
The Christian's conduct to old age, . .
The Christian's conduct to youth, . .
On the death of relatives and friends, .
The recollection of this third part in prayer to God,

THE

CHRISTIAN REMEMBRANCER.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

ON ENTRANCE INTO SPIRITUAL LIFE.

WHEREWITH shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? How shall I, a sinner approach the eyes of that Majesty, which cannot look upon sin without abhorrence? My iniquities are more in number than the hairs of my head, and my heart sinketh within me on their remembrance. My affections are naturally all inclined to the world and worldly things. My judgment is depraved; my will is perverse; my understanding is darkened; my knowledge vain; and I see nothing in me or about me but what by guilt is altogether defiled. I have sore proof of that scripture, that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually, and that from the sole of the foot, even to the head, there is no soundness in my nature; but only the wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores of sin.

How then can I please God? How shall such a worm, such a lump of perverse ungodliness, obtain his favor? Shall I seek to deserve it by my own good thoughts?—Alas! I am not sufficient of myself to think even one. Shall I by excellency of words approach my offended Maker?—He regardeth not words, but the spirit and the heart; and my spirit and

heart are wholly defiled. Shall I then by good works attempt to render him propitious?—O my God, where shall I find them! How can I begin to act, before I have begun to think, what is right? How can the exercises of the body be pure and free, when the soul is unholy and enslaved by sin? And if, from this day, I could cease from evil, and do perfectly what is just and right, which the experience of all men tells me is impossible; yet, what will become of the long black catalogue of iniquities, both in heart and life, which are already written against me? How shall I wipe off the sins of my nature and my life, respecting the times that are past?

O Lord, thou hast revealed thyself, as a holy God, and a just. Thou hast declared, that thou wilt not spare the guilty. And I have offended thy righteous law in every hour and every action of my life. How then can I be saved? How is it possible for me to escape the wrath to come? My anxieties, like my sins, might justly overwhelm me; and I ought to tremble at the righteous judgment, which I know I deserve. There are but a few days at the most for me to live upon the earth; and I am not sure of one. O how shall I flee from the wrath to come! how shall I avoid eternal burnings, in which no man can dwell but with misery, and of which no man can think strictly but with horror! Lord, can such a sinner as I escape! Canst thou have mercy upon me!

Such are the breathings of the heart when it first begins to awake, and live, and feel that there is an evil and a curse in sin, and that sin, with all its evil, lieth at the door.

CHAPTER II.

THE METHOD OF MERCY.

SUCH a flowing from the heart, as that just mentioned, gladdens all heaven. It is the motion of the divine Spirit upon the troubled deep, and will ere long produce both life and peace.

Soul, dost thou feel the power of thy own corruption? Are these thy meek, yet bitter cries?—O hear, and may thy God enable thee to believe, the glad tidings of his own salvation!

Thou art a sinner, it is true; and thy mercy it is to see, in due measure, how great a sinner thou art. It is the first line in the large book of humiliation, which thou must be reading all thy life long. But Christ died for sinners such as thee; for all sinners that come unto God by him; for the vilest of sinners that see the vileness of sin, and bemoan it, as thou dost. He saved Mary Magdalene the harlot, Matthew the publican, Paul the persecutor, Peter, the swearer, liar, and denier of his Master, the malefactor on the cross, who had been a thief and a murderer, and ten thousand more like these; and he hath just the same power, means, and mercy to save thy soul, even thine.

He saves graciously, that is, freely; because no wisdom nor worth of man have contrived, or could have obtained his greatness of salvation. It was planned in grace, and performed by grace. It is all of grace, and bounty, and love, from beginning to end.

For this purpose he came into the world and took our nature upon him. He took it in its meanest and humblest form; and was content to be born in a stable, to be brought up by a laboring man, to labor with him too, to suffer the worst evils of human life, and the sorest pains of human death, that so he might be an

oblation or sacrifice in the stead of his people, and render an atonement to the justice of God for them. These sufferings and this atonement are the debt due to the law and holiness of God, without which, consistent with his attributes, he could not spare the sinner, but by which he can be both just, and yet the justifier of him who taketh refuge in Jesus. Yea, this dear Savior having paid the penalty due to his transgressions, God is now faithful and just to forgive him his sins, or rather more faithful and just to forgive them, than he could be in laying on the punishment again, which Christ endured in that behalf.

Christ also lived upon earth to fulfil all righteousness; and he fulfilled it completely for his redeemed. He makes himself over to them; and all he hath is theirs, through faith in him. Thus they have a right to call him, what he is, *the Lord our righteousness.* God is well pleased for his righteousness' sake, and beholds every poor sinner who trusts in Christ, and lives in him, as unblamable and unreprovable in his own most piercing sight, yea, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. This righteousness is that garment of salvation, which covers them wholly, and fits them perfectly for the kingdom of heaven.

Contrite soul, believest thou this? Is this good news, the very gospel or good news of God? Search and see. Read and pray over thy bible, and thou wilt find, that it is the very voice and will of thy Lord. O that the fallow, the hard, and barren ground of thy heart may be so broken up by his power, as to welcome this joyful news, like the thirsty soil receiving the showers from the skies!

CHAPTER III.

THE SOUL'S DIFFICULTY IN EMBRACING MERCY.

THESE are glad tidings indeed (the soul may say) to one weary and heavy laden with sin as I am, could they be apprehended rightly, and maintained constantly, in the strivings of sin and the doubtings of nature. I am therefore earnest to know these two things: 1. How shall I embrace this mercy of Christ proposed in the gospel? And, 2. How shall I keep up the spirit and intentions of it in my heart and life, so as to endure to the end and be saved?

I know not how it is with others, but I find myself very unable, nay, most unable when I have the greatest occasion, to lay hold upon this mighty mercy of God, and to rest upon it, and to make it my own, and to use it for my consolation and support. I long for this with the full purpose of my heart; and my groans and tears in secret are well known unto God. But I have also an evil heart of unbelief, which suggests a thousand doubts and fears, sometimes of God's willingness to save me particularly, who am so very vile and faithless; and sometimes of my own reality of desire towards him, which is often dreadfully mixed with the desire of other things, and overwhelmed with cares and sorrows, difficulties and temptations. O what great troubles and adversities hath God shown me! How shall I be delivered from the body of this death! How shall I lay hold on eternal life! How shall I know, that I have fast hold; or be assured, that none shall be able to pluck me from it! O Lord, to be assured of this thy favor, is, both in life and death, of more worth to me than a thousand times ten thousand worlds. For I might have these, and be wretched; but, with thee, I can have nothing but life and peace for evermore.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NATURE AND EXERCISE OF FAITH.

FAITH is the gift and the operation of God. It comes by the Holy Spirit's power, moving and strengthening the sublimest faculties of the soul, and is really a regeneration, a rebegetting, a revival of life from the dead. Thus the believer is said to be born of the Spirit, because it is the Spirit's office in the covenant of grace to regenerate, and because it is the promise concerning the Spirit to all, even as many as God shall call. And thus also the Christian is said to be born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

When this principle of divine life and light is given to the soul, it enables the soul to feel its own loss and misery, and to see its own sin and darkness. A man can have no true sight of the nature of sin but by this grace. He is, therefore, in some sense, a believer before he knows himself to be one. Faith acts in him, before he can be sensible of the reflex act of faith. He first lives; and then he feels his misery; and then he cries for mercy. He cries for mercy, and then is enlightened to see the way of mercy in the word of mercy. He is next enlightened to behold the free welcome and rich bounty of this mercy to all returning sinners. He is enabled to contemplate upon himself, and to view the fitness of God's mercy for him, and his fitness, as a convinced sinner, for it. He is then strengthened to embrace it, like a poor creature who must perish without it, but who shall never perish with it. And at length God's grace seals itself upon the soul, by giving a true taste of joy and peace in believing, insomuch that the broken drooping heart revives, and is able to say, "I do humbly venture to believe that Christ died for me, and will save me for evermore."

Now, through all the course of this gracious work, which, according to the will of God, is slower in some than in others, there is often much doubting and disputing in the man's own conscience. It is a sore struggle, at times, to quell the clamors of unbelief, and the suggestions of satan; and at last, perhaps, the soul embraces the reality of God's love in Christ, with a trembling kind of hopeless hope, and doubting believing. These things often puzzle the understanding, and perplex the whole will and affections. A true believer is like Rebecca laboring with twins, a faithless Esau and a trusting Jacob; and so, like her, he cries out, If it be so, why am I thus? Whereas, if it were not so, if he were not of God, it would not be thus. Nature alone could not struggle; nor can what is dead strive against the stream. The bent of nature is against grace. So again, if he were all grace and no sin, he would feel no trouble; for the opposition of grace is to nature and to the sin which is in it. And it is a good sign, though not a pleasant feeling, that there is this conflict; it demonstrates the life of God to be within.

In this way, the Christian embraces the gospel. He is enabled in hope against hope to believe it, as the grand charter of his salvation. And this very act of believing is the evidence within, concurring with the evidence of the written word without, that his name is enrolled in the charter, and that he is consequently entitled to all its blessings.

Take heart, therefore, thou child of God, and fear not. Thou hast the promise, the power, the mercy, and the truth of Jehovah on thy side; and who can prevail against him? If thou dost not wholly believe, or art not perfectly cleared from all doubts, be not however dismayed. The faithfulness of thy Lord is not grounded upon the perfect exercise of thy faith, but upon his own sovereign grace and love. Thou desirest to trust him with thy whole heart; but thou never

couldest have desired this, if he had not wrought that disposition within thee. He was the Author, and he will be the Finisher, of all in thee, as well as of all for thee. If God did not spare his own Son for thy sake, what will he spare beside? Who shall, or who can, lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?—It is God himself, with whom there is neither evil nor folly, that justifieth thee from both. Who can condemn thee!—It is Christ who blotteth out thy sins by his precious blood, or rather is risen again to present thee faultless in his righteousness before the throne, and to plead for thee as that Advocate who never lost a cause. Who shall separate thee from the love of Christ? Shall the evils of life, all the distresses of time, and all the rage of the devil? Nay, in all these things thine Almighty Savior, will render thee a conqueror, and more than a conqueror, because he hath loved thee. O divine words that follow! From thine inmost affections, from the very ardor and spirit of faith, mayest thou breathe them forth! "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus my Lord."

CHAPTER V.

ON COMMUNION WITH THE DIVINE PERSONS IN JEHOVAH.

CURIOUS speculations upon the Trinity profit not. There is a sort of knowledge in this, as in other things, which betrays its own falsehood by puffing up the soul.

Much time hath been lost, and many hurtful disputes have been raised concerning the *mode* of the Son's generation from the Father, and the *manner* of the Spirit's procession from both; points which have not been revealed, and which therefore are not necessary to faith. It is sufficient for us to apprehend, that there are three persons in one Jehovah, or self-existent Godhead, and that this Godhead is One; that we are privileged to have communion with these divine persons in their several offices of salvation; and that, by the unction of the Spirit, we come into the grace of the Son, and possess the love of the Father, now and for evermore. He that doth not thus apprehend the doctrine of the Trinity, only apprehendeth the phantom of his own imagination, and is never the better for his speculation, however abstruse or refined.

Of what avail to my soul are all the nicest disquisitions of men? I want food and light, reality and enjoyment. These do thy word, O Lord, afford in plentiful measure, when thy grace opens the well-spring to my heart. I am there taught to pray for that anointing of the Holy One, which shall lead and guide me into all thy saving truth. By him I am both instructed and enabled to renounce myself, to put on Christ, and to cleave to my Redeemer as my only portion and hope. By the Spirit and Son of God, I am led up to fellowship with the Father, and to call upon him as my Father, even mine. O my blessed God, my Abba, my Father, my life and my all, what hast thou revealed to my poor soul; and how much more thou hast done and prepared than thou hast hitherto revealed to men, or than men in this state are able to conceive? O thou fountain of unutterable blessedness, thou unfathomable height and depth of love, help me thus to know thee in the secret of my soul; and may all thy works of providence and grace increase this inward knowledge to the end? While others dispute, let me enjoy.

Manifest thy precepts to my mind, and say to my longing spirit, "Peace be unto thee, for I am thy salvation."

One spark of this life is of more worth than the whole universe of notions; for this not only brings an understanding of divine things superior to all speculations, but gives with it a fulness of satisfaction, arising from the very taste and perception of the things themselves. Faith takes them for realities, hope is enkindled by them as such, and love finds them to be so, and embraces them with joy to the end.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST, BY WHICH HE BECAME IMMANUEL.

Who shall unfold this mystery, or unfathom this love of my God! The ancient of days became a child of days, and the Lord of all would be the servant of all, that he might be a Redeemer, a Brother, a Friend of poor unworthy mortals, of vile apostates and rebels, such as I am, and such as, without him, I and all others for ever must have been.

He took our nature without sin, that he might bear our sin. If sin had been in that which he took for himself, it would not have been possible that one, who was equally sinful, should have taken off sinfulness from others. Thus he, who was not, and could not be a sinner by nature, did, by imputation, become the greatest of sinners: He bare our sins in his own body on the tree; and Jehovah laid upon him the iniquities of us all. This dear Immanuel was a lamb without spot, and therefore meet to be slain for atonement; and a

e-goat, or strong-one, going off, laden with iniqui-
and so able to bear them away into everlasting
etfulness.

e was very God and very man in one Christ. As
st he is Immanuel, or God with us. What his
e implies, that he truly is. He is God with us,
to save and to succor, able to bless and to enli-
in all our pilgrimage from earth to heaven. "Lo!
with you always, even unto the end of the world."
id is this thy promise, O thou meek and lowly Jesus!
shall I be still slow of heart to believe it! Shall I
ys be hanging my head like a bulrush; and shall
yes be still gushing out their faithless tears; when
hast promised not only the best of creatures in
1 and heaven, but thine own blessed Self to be
me, who art Lord of all! O my dear Redeemer,
o with me by thy gracious power, that I may be
ly sensible of thy continual presence; manifest
elf to me as thou dost not unto the world; for I
hine, and I desire to give up myself and all I am
have, to thy blessed will, for evermore. Be in-
l, according to thy name, my Immanuel, my God
me, and in me of a truth, that I may walk with
as one agreed, and draw from thee all those sup-
s of grace, life, and peace, without which I can
her be happy, nor alive to thy glory; O hear and
ver, for mine eyes are upon thee.

CHAPTER VII.

ON CHRIST'S DESCENT INTO EGYPT.

T behoved this Immanuel in all things to be made
unto his brethren; therefore he went down into
ypt. All he did upon earth had some use and

meaning. By some facts, he testified what he was doing, and by others, what he would continually do for his people.

Out of Egypt have I called my Son, saith the Lord. His redeemed were spiritually in Egypt, the house of bondage. They were there under the service of a cruel king, a prince who ruleth in the world by usurpation till the time appointed. Grievous are the tasks, and sad are the wages of this tyrant of souls. Jesus went down and came up again for a sign. As the head of his people he did this, preaching their redemption from bondage in himself. In their order and times, they come up out of Egypt too, by the strong hand of this captain of salvation. He is great in might, and therefore not one of them faileth. The prince of the air loseth his dominion over them; and though he follows them like Pharaoh, and chase them all the way, he cannot hinder their course of faith, nor rob them of their Canaan in glory.

O marvellous love of my Savior! Was it not enough for thee to take up my nature in its best estate, without submitting to a manger, to contempt, to persecution, to banishment, and all the wrongs of men? O how low must I be fallen, that it should be needful for thee, (for if it had not been needful, this act had been spared) to endure poverty, wretchedness, and shame, that I might be delivered from all! I was in Egypt, and thou camest to me. Thy grace preached liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound. Thy power performed what thy love proclaimed; thou broughtest the prisoners from the prison, and those that sate in darkness out of the prison-house. I, O wonderful to tell! I, among thy ransomed, have followed thee in the regeneration out of this dismal Egypt, and have tasted a little of the glorious liberty of thy children. Not unto me, my dear Savior, not unto me, but unto thy name be all the praise. I was wallowing in

the mire of Egypt, and in the mud of the Nile; I was entirely given up to the filth and pollutions of this world, and should have remained therein till I had been sunk for ever in its wo; unless thy mighty arm had wrought my deliverance, and set me free. Glory to thee, Jehovah Jesus, thou Savior all divine, for mercy unmeasurable like this, for grace and glory yet before me, to which there is no end! O how shall I show forth thy praise for all which thou hast done for my soul!

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST.

We see but little into the true worth and importance of the miracles of Jesus, if we look no farther than the outward facts. These indeed do speak aloud the glory of his divine person to the carnal sense of man, and did so even to those, who hated and blasphemed him; but the grandeur of his works consisted in this, that they were only outward testimonies of the far more noble operations of his grace within the soul, which were not to endure for a time only, like their outward signs, but throughout eternity.

He gave sight to the blind, that he might testify unto men his sovereign power in giving light and understanding to the mind. He opened the deaf ear that men might know by whom alone they can hear aright the good news of salvation, and live for ever. The lame he caused, in a moment, to walk, that his people might learn, that they can only move, as well as live by him, and that without him they can do nothing. He cured the foul leprosy of the body in order to show that only by him can be healed the far more deplorable

leprosy of sin, which covers and defiles the mind. All sicknesses vanished at his command, that we might have hope in him, as the only Restorer of our souls. He cast out unclean spirits, and suffered them to possess the swine, who were thereby lost, that he might teach his redeemed, that he only delivered and can deliver them from the power of darkness, which being let loose upon the world, drive them violently and swiftly down the steep course of time into a gulf of inextricable wo. The hungry multitudes were fed by his miraculous power to explain this great truth, that he is not only the Giver of spiritual life, but the constant Sustainer and Nourisher of it from day to day: And he did this by small means, that the excellency of the power might be known to be his, and not in the creatures, however sanctified, blessed, and used. The winds and waves were instantly obedient to his word, that his beloved might rejoice in him, as the Stiller of all spiritual waves, the tumultuous madness of this world, the ragings of satan, and the confusion of all things. These can roar and foam no longer than it pleaseth him; and when they roar and foam at all, it shall turn out in the end for the good of his people. The dead were raised to proclaim his rising power, and to declare, that the issues also of spiritual life and of endless death are altogether in his hands. Whatever he did, was an act of mercy, under which he revealed as a parable, innumerable lessons, of grace and love. All his works proclaimed him to be both the Creator of all, (and what seems more comforting to his chosen) the Redeemer and Restorer of millions that were lost.

Learn from these things, O believer, what thy Lord God hath done for thy soul. He quickened thee from the death of trespasses and sins; he giveth light and peace to thy mind; he feedeth thee with the bread of life; he cureth all thy spiritual diseases; he quelleth all thy manifold enemies and temptations; he

strengtheneth thee with strength in thy soul; he doth all that is done in thee by grace; and he will never cease working in thee both to will and to do, no, not even when he hath brought thee to his kingdom in heaven.

O pray fervently my soul, rightly to apprehend these precious things. If thou teach me, blessed Lord, then shall I know them, in some measure at least, according to my capacity, as they ought to be known. Such knowledge indeed is too excellent for my clouded faculties of nature; they cannot, if left to themselves, attain unto it. I therefore seek not to obtain the apprehension of these truths, as fallen man can teach or attain them, but as thou dost teach and enforce them. In thy teaching, though the substance of the truths be the same, there is a wide difference from all the teaching of men. Man by his own study gropeth in the dark, and wearieth himself in vain to reach up to the perception of thine excellent wisdom; but thou art light in thyself, and sendeth down both illumination and influence at once, to such as are taught by thee, by which they not only know thy truth, as a truth in itself, but feel the blessings of it, as a truth applied and made their own. They find strength and nourishment in what thou givest for food, and not airy words or unprofitable speculations, which, without thee, are all that can be found in the best and wisest instructions of men. O raise me up, then, my blessed Teacher, above the pictures of things, which may be gained by words, to the true enjoyment of the things themselves. So shall I not hear or give discourse only of thy spiritual feast, like a man in a dream, but shall taste and see indeed how good and gracious thou art, and that all life, power, and consolation are from thee.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE WORD OF CHRIST.

FOR ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven; and upon earth it runneth very swiftly. The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting. Give me understanding, and I shall live.

Such is the word, and the end of the word, of my gracious Redeemer. It is called a word, because it is a revelation; all words being only the revelation or expression of things. This revealed word is settled in heaven upon the throne of God, is ordered by the Divine persons in all things, and is sure, because ordered by them in a covenant, which cannot be broken.

It is a word too of testimony, because it testifieth of my Savior throughout, either directly by the institutions and declarations of his grace, or indirectly by the courses and actions of his providence, meeting in one and the same end, which is the guidance and salvation of his people.

This word, in the conduct of the Divine Spirit, is also a word of power, and the fit instrument of all his works. It is his spiritual sword, by which he divides asunder the soul and spirit, and effects that circumcision of the heart, whereby his people are enabled to live no longer unto themselves, but unto God. The operation is painful indeed to the flesh, or to nature; but it causeth the spirit to rejoice in Christ Jesus, and to give up its confidence in all things beside.

For this purpose, then, of testifying for Christ, and of acting by the Spirit in the redeemed, is all the written word calculated and given. Hence, the institutions of the law preached Jesus and his salvation, the prophecies declared the same truth, the histories are records of God's conduct towards his people from age

to age, the gospels are evidences of the accomplishment of all these things in Christ, and the epistles are explanations and enforcements of these things to believers. In short, all the holy writings relate to Christ, and to the redeemed in him. Jesus is the Alpha and Omega of the whole word and work of the Most High.

In this word and its experience consist all the wisdom and comfort of a Christian. Here is truth without error; so that he may read without fear, and trust without danger. All other books, as they come from men, have more or less of folly or vanity in them, and often are looked over with little true satisfaction and improvement. But in this volume, grace not only discovers something new, but brings new force out of old truths, which have charmed the soul a thousand times. It discovers the multiform and manifold wisdom of God, in what he hath spoken; insomuch that, from under the veil of one precious instruction, another and another shall arise, as the soul is improved to bear them. These are the steps of the kingdom; and the higher the renewed mind can ascend, it not only understands better what it hath already passed over, but sees farther and wider into the glories yet before it, till it is ravished with unspeakable delight in the infinite knowledge and love of God.

The right understanding of this word doth not puff up, but humbleth. He hath not a true apprehension of its sense, who is lifted by it in himself. The lowly reader is the only learner. To him is not a word lettered or sounded, so much as a living and lively word engrafted. It enters into his heart more than his ears, and diffuseth its sweet savor through all the faculties, setting them into delightful exercises for the divine glory.

The great depth of the word of God keeps the real Christian ever a learner. He knows that it is impos-

sible to reach the utmost of God's wisdom. There will be always mysteries to be unfolded, because man's capacity is finite; at the bound of which, how wide soever it may extend, remaineth ignorance. One who had been in the third heaven, and in spirit caught up into paradise itself, where he heard unspeakable words, could only say, when he talked of the divine counsels, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" He could stand upon the shore and taste, but all beyond was an infinite ocean.

The true disciple, however, knows enough to make him see the vanity and unprofitableness of all learning and wisdom, (if so they may be called) out of Christ. The speculations of men are but dreams, and their pursuits but idle labors at the best, which begin and end in self, and have no higher object than this evil world. The poor simple countryman who hath learned Christ, (and many such, blessed be God, there are) can pity the pompous ignorance of those, who know almost every thing but God and the proper value of their own souls. By a logic, far beyond that of the schools, he hath been led to this conclusion, that God is his Father, that Christ is his Savior, that the Holy Spirit is his guide, that the Bible is his charter and his library, that the devil, the world, and the flesh, are his foes, that the earth is the wilderness of his banishment, that heaven is his home, and that all the favor, love, and power of the Godhead are engaged to bring him thither. The worldly wise can only value this (if at all) when carnal knowledge is dying with their bodies, and all their trifling thoughts are about to perish.— Hence it is that the poor man's knowledge being sound and true, though ever so small, can stand the onset of trials in the world and death at last; while the learned and knowing, with none or small degrees of the true

understanding, fall into errors, fail in their course, or die almost doubting and despairing.

O my soul, seek thou the substantial wisdom, which cometh from God, and which time, or rather eternity itself, cannot diminish, but will brighten and improve. Though other knowledge may be valuable for the purposes of this world, yet this alone can ripen for heaven, and is therefore most earnestly to be sought by thee, whose business and calling, whose citizenship and hope, are most principally there.

And, O thou, who art the living and life giving *word* itself, through whom and for whom all the written word was given, come and possess my soul! I long for nothing, and would always long for nothing, but for thy wisdom and thee. O forgive my unsettled heart, which hath so often been taken up with a multitude of unprofitable things, instead of being fixed wholly upon thee, who art the only Way, the Truth, and the Life! I can have no rest, no firm establishment, but upon thee. My nature is unstable as water; and I live moreover in a slippery world. Leave, O leave me, therefore, not to myself, nor to the power of the evils, which are above, beneath, and on every side. Set me upon thyself, my blessed Rock, and order thou my goings in the way, and lead me into the way everlasting. Who is sufficient for these things, but thou, who art all-sufficient? How can I, so poor a creature, hope either to stand or to prevail, but through that strength, which is made perfect in weakness, through that wisdom, which cannot be deceived by fraud, and that love which is stronger than death, and durable as the days of heaven! O Lord, be on my side, and then neither my own flesh, nor the corruption of the flesh in others, no, nor all the powers of darkness, shall be able so much as to hurt me. I am thine, O save me now, save me to the end, and save me for ever!

CHAPTER X.

ON THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

THOUGH my Redeemer was to be, and was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; though he was to have, and had, all our iniquities in his own body on the cross; though he was to bear the curse, and was cursed for the transgression of his people; and, for a token of it, was hanged on a tree; yet, in his own person, he was pure, harmless, and undefiled, and so was called typically the holy Lamb of God, without blemish or any possible defect. He was without sin, from the manger to the tomb. When Satan tried him in the desert, he found nothing in him of weakness of mind or defilement of body; and therefore his temptations had nothing to lay hold of, but fell to the ground. His enemies among men, stirred up by the malice of the adversary, could not, when he challenged them, convince him of sin; nor was any thing like guile to be found in his mouth. All his words were wisdom itself, and all his actions were purity and love.

There are three principal reasons why such a Redeemer became us; and these are to be found only in Christ.

A sacrifice in the first place, was necessary for our iniquities; for, without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. The justice of God required atonement; because it is inconsistent with the holiness of his nature to spare the guilty. No truth, in all his word, is more plain than this. But nothing could be substituted in the room of sinners, which was sinful in itself; for this would only increase the wrath of the Most High. And, therefore, as his love was pleased to provide and accept a substitute; such an one appeared, as was without spot, or defect of any kind in himself, and had

nothing to answer for of his own. This is the signification of all the pure sacrifices under the law, which speak aloud, that they are altogether vicarious, or one offered in the stead of another.

In the next place, the redeemed, as sinners, wanted righteousness, without which they cannot appear with acceptance before God: And, as a perfect righteousness can only be pleasing to him, and all men are incapable of producing such an one, and as therefore it can only be obtained by accounting the righteousness of a substitute for their own; Jesus Christ was Jehovah in our nature, in order to be *Jehovah our Righteousness.* God is well pleased for his righteousness' sake, which is infinite and everlasting, capable of justifying from all things, and through all times, even into eternity.—Christ, not for himself, but for his people, fulfilled all righteousness, and upon their account magnified the law of their God. It was for this end, that he lived so many years upon earth, and went through all the stages of human life to manhood; by which his people of all ages might have, through faith, a right of acceptance in him.

And, thirdly, the merit of the sacrifice for sin, and the substitution of righteousness for sinners, required some person to intervene, or to stand between God and sinners, and to offer these exchanges in their behalf. This office is the office of a priest, who is a mediator between God and man, and who must therefore be holy in himself. Christ was this perfect person; and so was such an High Priest as became us, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, having an unchangeable priesthood, to which he is consecrated for evermore.

These are the reasons of all his labors in love and righteousness: And he was able to merit and go through them, being Jehovah in man; as well as to suffer what he took upon him, being man in Jehovah.

O what a task of unparalleled grace and humility is here! Who could have done such unimpeachable works; but he who is perfect in himself? Who could have done them to render others perfect for ever before God, but one so much above all created perfection, as to have for others an unbounded perfection to spare?

Lord, help me to meditate upon thee, and upon all that thou hast done upon my soul! O put on this garment of salvation, this robe of righteousness which thy blessed hands have perfectly wrought, that it may be my wedding garment in the day of my espousals, when I shall leave the world, and appear before the Majesty on high! This is the righteousness of saints, pure, white, and shining, in which they walk with thee in glory, and in which I also hope to walk, unworthy creature as I am, both with thee and with them. O then shall I appear without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, all acceptable to God, all illustrious in thee! Lord, what hast thou wrought indeed? Thou hast wrought for me to entitle me to heaven; and thou hast wrought in me to fit me for heaven; a work, as it seems to me no less difficult than the other; so stubborn and vile am I, and so opposite to thy pure nature is mine. I marvel, and with tears of joy I marvel, at all the mysterious wonders of thy redemption, at thy plain and clear, yet unsearchable love, at thine awful justice magnified even by grace itself, at the kindness thou hast shewn and the goodness thou hast promised, at the never ending line of wisdom in thy holy word, and at the unbounded scene of glory yet before me. I am overwhelmed, I am astonished, at the weight and grandeur of thy divine benevolence. Accept the faculties of my body and soul, all I am and all I have; and let them be found to thy praise, and honor, and glory, both now and at the day of thine appearing! Amen.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

"BEHOLD, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD afflicted me, in the day of his fierce anger."

No, my Jesus, never was sorrow like thine. Thou bearest the griefs of millions; griefs, which would have sunk those millions into unsufferable wo. Omnipotence itself groaned under the tremendous load, which forced from thy pure and perfect body, not common sweat (the curse, inflicted with human labor,) but a dreadful sweat, bursting forth in great drops of agonizing blood. O what a doleful cry didst thou utter; and who but thyself can conceive those to us unknown pangs and sufferings, which forced from thy sacred lips, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!*

The meditation of thy sufferings and death is painful in the sympathy of nature; yet I cannot wish that thou hadst not endured them, nor didst thou fully wish it for thyself. Thou wast contented to be betrayed into the hands of sinful men for this very purpose. It was by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, that all the parts of this solemn event were transacted. And it is for the everlasting interest of me and of thousands, that all the scriptures concerning thee were thus awfully fulfilled.

Lord, what is sin, that thou thyself couldest not be spared; when from the souls of thy people it was taken off, and laid upon thee? Can any thing more solemnly describe the hatred of the divine nature to sin, and the severity of the divine justice upon account of it, than the pangs, the horrors, the cries of thee, my Jesus, thou suffering Son of God? And if thou wert sacrificed

for sin, who in thyself knewest no sin; what shall become of those, who reject thy saving sacrifice, and yet all the while have nothing but sin in themselves?

Who could support such excruciating tortures, unassisted and uncomforted as thou wert, even upon a just account? It was not in the power of a creature to sustain thine inward griefs, thine outward torments, and the entire dereliction or forsaking of God, of men, and of nature, all together and at once, as thou didst sustain them, upon any account or motive in the world. But thou endurest the whole with dignified complacency and satisfaction, even for thine enemies, to convert them into friends, and to make rebels and apostates heirs of God, and joint heirs with thyself of an eternal weight of glory. May I not turn thine own words and say, "Behold, and see, was there ever love like thy love, which thou shewedst for thy people, when the Lord afflicted thee in the day of his fierce anger!"

Lord, how shall I speak, and what shall I say to these things? Shall my incredulous heart be still backward to believe? If Jesus died for my sins, can I die for them too? If he freely bare the curse for my sake, will the justice of my God still require the curse at my hands? If my iniquities were taken by my Savior, and he made a full and perfect atonement for them; can I dare to affront the divine Majesty by supposing, that he is yet so unrighteous as to charge them all again upon me? O forgive my hard and impenitent heart, that I should ever imagine such blasphemy against thy faithfulness and love; that I should even think, that thou canst be so unjust and untrue, even in contradiction to thine own word, as to lay that still upon myself, which for my sake was entirely laid upon my dearest and most blessed Redeemer! Lord, I melt into tears of shame at myself, and into tears of comfort upon the remembrance of all this thy kindness to my soul. Thy blood, O my Jesus, cleanseth from *All* sin; and if from all,

what sin shall remain to be now charged home upon me! O help me thou mighty God, thou Prince of peace, that I may not be faithless, but believing!

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

NEVER was fact more strongly and undeniably established than this. Divine providence ordained, that it should be so; because upon this great truth depend all the assurance and efficacy of our redemption. If Christ be not raised (says the apostle) your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

But is there no proof of Christ's resurrection but the historical evidence?—Yes, blessed Lord, as thou givest thy people to know of the doctrine of salvation, that it is thine by the demonstration of the Spirit; so thou affordest to them a most convincing testimony, that thou art indeed risen from the dead, by their super-resurrection from the death of trespasses and sins. If thou hadst not been raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, it would have been impossible for any of them to have either received or walked in the newness of life. Their being spiritually quickened with thee, is a proof in itself of thy glorious resurrection, and a confirmation to their souls, that they are thine own unalienable inheritance, and that they shall also live with thee for ever.

Thou hast truly and graciously said, "I am the resurrection and the life: He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." Lord, I was long, and too long, dead to God and dead to thee.

shut up under the ban of thy law through sin, yet insensible, as a dead carcass is of all outward impressions, to my alienation and separation from thy life and peace. I was dead also to my own true interest and everlasting concerns, and alive only to sin, and to the service of the lord of sin, without perceiving his bitter tyranny and horrible designs. "So foolish was I and ignorant, yea, even as a beast before thee." The beasts indeed follow the end of their being, but I did not think upon mine. In tender mercy didst thou open mine eyes, that I might know myself and my misery, and that I behold thee as the only refuge and hope of my soul. Thou gavest me the powers of a new and spiritual life; and then I ran towards thee with an affection I had never felt before, and desired to know more and more of thee and the power of thy resurrection, that so I might no longer live in or for myself, but in thy faith and for thy glory. All this was thy work, and thine alone. I might as easily have created a world, as thus have new created myself in opposition to the millions of hindrances from within and without. No; it was thou, my dearest Redeemer, it was thou that restoredst my soul, and ledest me in the paths of righteousness for thy name's sake; and therefore I trust, (and though I am sometimes afraid, yet still do I trust, and would trust again) that, "surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and that I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

O what an evidence of thy resurrection hast thou thus brought home to my heart! Confirmed, as it is, by thy holy written word, it is demonstration itself, and is not to be argued away by all the corrupt reasonings of men. It is a demonstration both of word and of deed, of spirit and of thy faithfulness and truth, and of all my blessed and joyful interest therein. "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye

mountains, O forest, and every tree therein; for Jehovah hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel."

Thomas doubted, that I might believe more strongly. He was suffered to fail in his faith, that my faith and that of all thy children after him, might be improved and confirmed. But the mere evidence of sense can draw no blessing. His bodily view of thy resurrection was indeed followed by faith; but, from hence thou tookest occasion, most happily for thy people, to say, *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* Through thy mercy, I have believed, and according to thy word, have tasted thy blessing. Joy and peace in believing, quietness and assurance of mind, peace and resignation of soul, some holiness and strong desires after more, contempt of this world and foretaste of a better, preparation for death and views of a transporting eternity, are among the many proofs that thou art risen and livest, that thou art gracious and true. O that these proofs may increase in number and measure, that my faith may be more and more lively, and that my hopes may continually abound!

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

"THOU hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts, (in thy human nature,) for men; yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them, or that they might become an habitation of God through the Spirit."

This was prophesied of Jesus long before his advent

in the flesh. It was so prophesied, as though it were a fact already past; because the things to come are, as it were, present with God, being foreknown by his omniscient mind, and ordained in his holy will, which must be accomplished in all its decree.

He ascended to the throne of the Highest, with the full merits of his blood and righteousness, which were a sweet smelling savor, or a savor of rest, to the everlasting THREE. By this gracious ascension Jehovah is become propitious to the redeemed, receives them in Christ, loves them for Christ's sake, favors them with his peace in their hearts, carries them on by his providence and grace, makes all things work together for their good, bears them through life and death, and finally receives them to glory.

The ascension of Christ brought down gifts from above, and, as the greatest of all, the presence of the Holy Spirit, for his people. It was thus expedient for them, that he went away from the earth; for if he had not carried up his merits before the throne, the COMFORTER could not have come down to have led them into all the truth of God and of Christ, and to have made that truth effectual in their salvation. By his holy power they are brought to believe, and are kept in believing to the end.

Jesus ascended likewise to prepare a place for his chosen. In a short time they are to be dismissed from wretched houses of clay, standing in the waste wilderness of the world; and then they are to have in heaven everlasting mansions of beauty and glory, fitted and furnished by Christ himself. They are soon to leave their bodies, now thoroughly defiled by sin, and to put on some spiritual fabric, appointed for them, in which they are to remain with Christ and the blessed, till the final consummation of all things.

O what gifts, my blessed Redeemer, hast thou procured and purchased for my unworthy soul! What

hast thou not brought down of grace for time, and of promise for eternity, to me, and to helpless sinners like me! Yea, thou hast given thine own self to thy brethren, that in thee they might be given up to God, and like thee be a sweet smelling savor, ascending by thy merits to the highest heaven. O what shall I, what can I, render for mercies like these! I can give, poor as the gift is, only my heart and soul to thy dear glory; and I would not, surely I would not, restrain these. Yet I cannot offer these, so weak and so corrupt am I without the assistance of thy strength. Favor me, then, more and more, with thy gracious power, that my affections may be constantly mounting upward, longing for the place of my everlasting residence, and counting all things worse than dung, that would stop my progress thither. Where thou art, dear Lord, soon do I hope to be. I am tired of this earth, and of all its shifting miserable scenes; I am weary of this body, full of disorder and sin; I loathe the husks, which the swine of this world quarrel for and devour; and I can be satisfied with nothing less than thee and thy presence for ever. O my Beloved, when shall I ascend up after thee! All below is Mesech and Kedar, but, with thee there is the fulness, not the mere shadow of joy; and at thy right hand there are pleasures, not for a moment only, but for evermore. Thou hast said, *Surely, I come quickly.*—Amen, (reply the hearts of thy people, and my poor heart among them) yea, come Lord Jesus!

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE GLORIFICATION OF CHRIST.

THE mission and work of Jesus for our salvation was completed in the eternal glorification of his person in heaven. His body was spiritually, though not substantially changed in this great event, and thus, with his human soul, as one complete and perfect manhood, was taken into God. He now shines in the brightness of the divine glory, far above all principality and power, and every name that is named, whether in heaven or in earth; and he thus shines as the head of our redeemed nature, that his people may also be glorified with him, and be so united to him and to each other, as to become an holy temple and a glorious habitation of God through the Spirit.

"I pray, (said the gracious Redeemer) that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one with us; and the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."

O what transcendent height of glory is this, to which such creatures as myself, believing in Jesus, shall shortly be raised! What mind could have been sublime enough so much as to have thought of these wonders, if the Lord of glory himself had not revealed them?

The glory of Christ is not like the airy phantom which men call glory, but hath everlasting weight and solidity; it not only sends forth light, but is light: and all that can be conceived of splendor, excellency, durability, and bliss, meets in this glory, as its sole and substantial essence. The believer, therefore, is said to enjoy Christ, *an exceeding and eternal weight of glory*—exceeding all conception and comparison; eternal in its enjoyment and duration.

"It doth not yet appear, what we shall be; but we know, that when Christ shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is:" So that "with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.—Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!" O that my heart may feel the thanks, which no tongue can utter, and, in humble adoration, bless my God for his unspeakable gift.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.

WHEN the high priest, once a year, entered into the most holy place, he carried the fume of the sweet incense and the blood of the sin-offering with him. The fume was to cover the mercy-seat upon the ark of the testimony, and the blood was to be sprinkled before it. This shadowed forth the interceding office of the great High Priest, of our profession in the holiest of all. He is entered there with his own blood, by which he hath made a perfect atonement for his people, and with his own righteousness, which both covers himself as the propitiation, and his whole church under him, so as to render all, and all together, acceptable to the pure attributes of Jehovah.

Hence my Redeemer received his name of Angel, Interpreter, Advocate, or Intercessor. He pleaded for me, and for all poor sinners who come unto God by him, before the throne of the Highest. He fumeth out the merit of his blood, and the excellent perfection of his righteousness, filling all heaven (as it were) with

the fragrance of that, which is unutterably delightful to God himself. No broken-hearted rebel, who cometh unto God by this High Priest Jesus, shall ever bewail the insufficiency of his advocate, but rather shall bless the Lord for his mercy, in laying his help upon one so almighty. If he look to this Savior, then certainly he will be with him as his Angel Interpreter, or Advocate, one among a thousand to show unto him his uprightness; and he is gracious unto him, and saith, redeem him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom. Then his soul is brought back from the pit, and enlightened with the light of the living.

Our High Priest, bearing our nature, can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, though without their sin; and he is able to save us to the uttermost, or for evermore, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us. O that I may come therefore boldly, with liberty of speech, and with confidence of heart, to the throne of grace, that I may obtain the mercy I want, and find grace to help in the time of my need!

Blessed Lord thou hast showed me what thou hast done for me on earth, and what thou art now doing for the interests of my soul in thy kingdom. Thou settest before me, in both respects, the motives of the most sure and the most strong consolation; so that, in thee, I might have the fullest assurance of faith and hope. O work, if it be thy will, this rich consolation within me; for, without the effectual aid of thy power, I may reason upon these motives, but I cannot apprehend them; I may conclude for my mind, that they are true, but I shall not be able to apply their sweetness, strength, or truth to my heart. Lord, take thy poor servant's cause into thine own hand; plead it for him in the court of heaven; urge it upon him in the court of his own conscience on earth; let him feel the comfort of both in all the sorrows of his present state, so that no trial nor outrage from his enemies may be able to stagger his confidence in thee.

Though thou art in heaven, my Jesus, yet thou knowest where I am and whereof I am made; and thou rememberest, that I am but dust. O leave me not, neither forsake me; lest my own heart, without any thing else, and especially my own heart with ten thousand evil ones beside, draw me off from my only true hope to some wretched, stupid, corrupting refuge of lies! Intercede for me, as for Peter, that my faith fail not. He needed an advocate not more than I. O thou, that didst plead his cause with everlasting success, plead and take care of mine; that I, together with him, and all the clients of thy grace, may rejoice in thy goodness to my soul, and bless thy holy name for ever and ever!

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LOVE OF THE FATHER.

In this is manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the word, that we might live through him. We could have had no life but through the Redeemer; and we could not have had him but through the tender love of the Father. Nothing more forcible can show the love of God towards us than this, that he should give up Christ to the deepest humiliation and sufferings for our rescue and redemption. Had there been any possible method of salvation besides this, consistent with the divine attributes; surely the bitter cup would have passed away from the blessed Jesus, and God would not have permitted him to drink it. But God did not, and therefore could not, in this case, spare his Son, but delivered him up to death for our sakes; and thus, in

a most admirable manner and degree, commendeth his love towards us, while we were yet sinners, who therefore as such, could have done nothing to deserve it. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.

All this ensued according to the covenant of grace, which was settled between the divine Persons upon the throne of heaven; and when the Lord Jesus was sacrificed, then was this covenant ratified and established, Jehovah interposing himself therein, and through the divided flesh and spirit of the Messiah, satisfying his law and justice for the remission of sins.

By this new testament in the blood of the Savior, his people are not only admitted into fellowship with himself as their brother, yea as flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone in a more than espoused nearness; but they are also entitled, by a gracious right, to approach unto God as their Father. They are adopted into his family; and the covenant, established in the hands of the Mediator, is the testimony and the seal of it. Hence, they are no more strangers and foreigners, and much less slaves and enemies, but sons and heirs, children and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus; and so when they look up and pray, they do not take God's name in vain and speak falsely, when they call Jehovah himself, Abba, Father; but they utter what they have a right and privilege to utter, and what the Lord delights to hear.

O my soul, thou canst not be in a ten thousandth part so ready to be joyful in this matter, as thy God is to rejoice over thee. If he could regard thee so much when thou wert dead in condemnation and an alien, as to give up his Son for thy sake, how much more, when thou art reconciled by this very means, will he pour forth his compassion upon thee: If he was kind to thee, when he stood as thy Judge, and smote thy Sub-

stitute for thy sins; will he, can he, cease to be kind under the character of thy Father, thy merciful and gracious Father, in Christ Jesus? Lord, remove so wicked a thought, so diabolical a notion, of unbelief from my mind! It is treason against thy love, thy justice, thy truth, and all those attributes in thee, which are the shining rays of thy nature, to harbor so foul an opinion: It is atheism, madness, yea, the very falsehood and blasphemy of hell. Holy Father, drive by thy Spirit such base and abominable suggestions from my heart; and let me claim the privilege of my adoption, let me call myself thy child, though an unworthy child, and thus honor thy faithfulness and truth by living in the sense of my nearness and dearness to thee!

When my soul can most ascend to this its proper station, then time and the things of time are most under my feet; the world and all its bustles annoy me less; my heart beats freely for heaven; and I can look down from the hill, seeing the vanities and pitying the follies, which carry men away from God, and too often drown them in ruin and perdition.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LOVE OF THE SPIRIT.

If God be love, then the Spirit is love, because the Spirit is God. He manifests himself as the God of love, by unfolding and bestowing such love, as only God himself could have, and from himself could pour forth unto others.

The Holy Spirit, as one of the parties in the everlasting covenant, loveth his people with an everlasting

love. By him also they are made sensible of the love of the Father, and of the Son, when he sheddeth forth his own love upon their hearts; for it is He, who enables each of them to cry Abba, Father, under the taste of his mercy, and to say to Christ, Thou art my Savior, my Lord, and my God, in the rich experience of his grace. Without the love of the Spirit, as they could not know, so they could not come up to the love of the whole Trinity; for by him alone it is shed abundantly upon all that are his, both in earth and heaven.

If I were left to love God by my own fallen powers, and had not the continual help of the Spirit of love; I should fear, that I could do nothing but hate him entirely. The carnal mind is enmity itself against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The law of God is the pure life and love of God; and only by his Spirit can I delight therein, and then only after the inner man. Hence it must follow, that, if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Without him, every man must remain as he was born, earthly, sensual, devilish.

O how deeply then am I indebted to this divine Agent, for taking up his holy residence in my unworthy soul! What loving kindness and mercy have I not felt and enjoyed by his blessed power within me!

How is it, that He, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, should vouchsafe to take up his abode in a poor sinner's breast? What marvellous love is this, that he should stoop to dwell with one, whose heart hath been the residence of the evil spirit, and the cage of every unclean bird? Surely, it must be infinite love, which could cleanse so unholy a tenement, and keep it clean for himself against the manifold attempts to pollute it on every side.

Whatever I may lose then, O thou blessed Spirit, may I never lose the love of thee! The loss of fame,

of riches, and of all things here, are but of a small account in themselves, and can soon be made up by thy power; but the loss of thee is the loss of more than life itself, the parting with the very anchor of my soul, and turning me adrift into a dark ocean of doubt and despair. O then, forsake not thine own, who could never have been thine own but from thy mere love and bounty, and perfect all the work of grace in me, that, before men and angels, I may give indubitable proof, that indeed I am thine!

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT.

THE nature of man, since the fall, is carnal and prone to evil; nor can it raise up itself to the desire and enjoyment of heavenly things, but rather shuns and abhors them. It savoreth not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men and of the world.

Now, as whatsoever is born of the flesh is flesh, and as flesh and blood cannot inherit, nor even know the kingdom of God; it is not marvelous that Christ should say, ye must be born again, or that it is absolutely necessary for a man to be renewed in the spirit of his mind, before he can apprehend or enjoy the things of God. We see this plain necessity proved by the case of men; for no man seeks and knows God by all his own natural power; and every one, who doth know him freely confesses, that it is by grace alone he obtained that knowledge.

The first work of the Spirit, then, in a sinner, is "a new birth unto righteousness." As this is the Spirit's

office in the covenant of grace, so believers under it are said to be born of the Spirit. This is their entrance into the knowledge of themselves and of God. They are united unto God in Christ by the act of his Spirit, and so partake a new life, with new functions, faculties, and affections; which life is in all things opposite to the carnal life of their fallen nature, and creates, from the time of its birth, a constant warfare in them against the being and power of evil.

As this generation in its essence is the sole work of the Spirit; so is it likewise in all its effects. When the Christian begins to live spiritually, he is soon enabled to think and act spiritually. And as the views and objects of this life are out of the creature, and rest in God and in Christ; the Holy Spirit leads up the heart to a dependence on the divine persons for the attainment of them. This is faith: And thus it appears, that it is the gift and operation of the Spirit.

By this faith, the Christian desires, and attains what he desires: by this he prays, and hopes, and waits, and expects: by this he wrestles against sin, and satan, and the world: by this he looks with an holy contempt on all dying things, and beholds those delightful realities, which are invisible to sense: by this he knows himself to be a child of God, and the purchase of Christ: by this he sees a glorious immortality provided for him, and longs often to enjoy it: by this he suffers the will of God, as well as obeys it, knowing that it must work together for his good: by this he welcomes death itself, and at length obtains the victory over it through Jesus Christ his Lord. All this work of faith is carried on by the effectual agency of the Holy Spirit. It is an action upon the Spirit of a man, which none but the God of spirits either would or could perform.

He is called the Spirit of Christ, because he not only is one with him in Jehovah, but also takes of the

things of Christ and shows them to his people. Thus where his Spirit dwells, Christ is said to dwell, because of their inseparable union. If Christ dwell in our hearts by faith, it is therefore because the Spirit of Christ is in us, and is in us of a truth. It was the Spirit of Christ in the apostle which enabled him to say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

To thee then, O thou Holy Spirit of truth, and by thine own power, do I look up for and hope, and for the increase of faith and hope and every blessing! O work in me to will and to do what is right; for without thee, I can neither will nor do any thing but evil. I am all depravity; but thou art grace itself, and the God of all grace. I am weakness, instability, and want; but thou art everlasting strength, the rock of ages, the fulness which filleth all in all. I have nothing, but thou hast all things. O, behold thy poor servant, whom thou hast made willing to serve thee; and let all the good pleasure of thy will be done in me and by me. Abate my pride, subdue my unbelief, mortify my corruptions, strengthen my soul. All that I need, supply, according to thy riches in glory by Christ Jesus. So shall I be stedfast in thy stedfastness, lively in thy life, active in thy power, faithful in thy grace, wise in thy wisdom, holy in thine holiness, happy in thy love, persevering to the end by thy care, comfort, and preservation. O, who and what am I, that thou hast so tenderly brought me hitherto; when, like millions around me, I might have been justly cut off, and left silent in darkness! Help, O help me to adore thee, and to testify of thy goodness and grace, in heart, in mind, and in lip, and in life, both now and for ever!

CHAPTER XIX.

ON THE EQUAL OBLIGATION OF BELIEVERS TO THE THREE PERSONS IN JEHOVAH.

IT is an error to suppose, that we are indebted to one more than another of the divine persons; for their love is but one and the same love, as their essence or nature is one and the same; and there could not exist such a difference or inequality of kindness to men, unless there was such a difference or inequality in themselves, as would not stand with the unity of their Godhead.

The love of the three persons formed the covenant of grace from everlasting, in which they were equally and undividedly concerned; and though the fulfilment of this covenant had necessarily an order and distinction, according to the several engagements of the three distinct persons, yet the mind and will of the Godhead were but one, and the object of their power but one, even Jehovah's glory in the salvation of sinners.

The Father loved, and concurred in the redemption of his chosen by Christ; the Son loved, and bare their sins in their nature, glorifying in that nature all the attributes of the Godhead; the Spirit loved, and engaged to make effectual the whole plan, by fitting the heart to receive, and by carrying to the heart the benefits of eternal salvation. Thus God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself; Christ fulfilled all that was given him to do; the Spirit enlivens, enlightens, and seals to the day of redemption. This is the order of the covenant; beginning with the Father, and, through the Son and Spirit, descending from heaven to the salvation of his people; but, in the order of their enjoyment of this covenant, the Spirit begins with them, and they ascend by him next to the Son,

and then to the Father. This is a blessed mystery of faith, which (however plain in the scriptures) can only be understood truly in the course of a gracious experience. No mere notions, and especially of the carnal mind, can possibly reveal it. The tuition, or rather intuition, is altogether divine.

What a blessed thing it is to believe and to know assuredly, that the wisdom, will, affection, and power, of all the persons in Jehovah, are concerned in the salvation of every poor sinner that repenteth? What a confidence of spirit ought not this to inspire in the children of God! If their Lord be thus engaged and concerned for their welfare, how can any of them be lost, or fail of what he hath prepared for them? O my soul, rejoice in the love of the Father, Son, and Spirit, that one God, who hath done such great things for thee, and who will yet do more, yea, more than eye hath seen, ear heard, or entered into the heart of man to conceive. To this *one God* be glory. Amen. Hallelujah!

CHAPTER XX.

ON THE PARTICULAR DESIGN AND USE OF THE SEVERAL HOLY SCRIPTURES.

BLESSED Lord, thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path! Without this glorious revelation, I must have remained as I was born, a poor, helpless, hopeless, and miserable sinner.

By this is thy servant taugh the order and excellency of thy first creation, when man was created in righteousness and true holiness, and lived therefore in tranquillity and peace. Hence we learn how he fell from thee, and, in falling, became spiritually dead and

cut off from thy grace in his soul; while his body received the seeds of dissolution, and began to die, from that very hour. I also am instructed to see thy mercy, proclaiming a Redeemer in the midst of thy justice, which otherwise must have destroyed, or made wretched without remedy, my whole race. Thou ordainedst a covenant by sacrifice with the first believers, showing thereby in type and shadow the great atonement of Jesus Christ, who, by thine own everlasting covenant, was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. By faith in this propitiation, they offered up their spiritual sacrifices, when they presented before thee the appointed creatures; and "according to this faith they died, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

By this holy word I also learn, how, for the dreadful impieties of the old world, thou broughtest on a flood upon the earth, destroying all mankind but the small remnant of one family. My eyes have seen abundant testimonies of this truth, within the bowels as well as upon the face of this globe; in beholding, what once lived upon the surface at great depths beneath, and what once inhabited the seas upon the tops of the highest mountains.

By thy blessed record I understand, that thou madest a covenant with Noah and Abraham, and the other patriarchs, promising the great Savior to them and their seed. Thou didst suffer their offspring to go down into Egypt, and broughtest them up again with thy mighty hand, that by this thou mightest proclaim a more gracious deliverance to thy people. The plagues of Egypt were strong emblems of the curses and evils, which sin brings upon the souls of all men by nature; and thy visitations of Israel were likewise representations of thy conduct in grace towards all thy redeemed.

Thou deliverest to this day thy people from the world and the devil, by the blood of the paschal Lamb, and sendest them forth from their power, to become sojourners as in a wilderness, and to seek a better country and a heavenly.

Thou didst appoint all the rites and ceremonies of the holy law to show forth the Savior's love, life, and death, till he should come. They are lively prophecies, and wise memorials, of what he was to be, and to do, and to suffer, for the salvation of poor sinners. No mind, but thine, could have contrived such a long train of mysterious truths, which were all to be fulfilled; no power, but thine, could have established and accomplished them all from age to age; no love but thine, could have undertaken salvation at so costly an expense, as the sufferings and death of thy blessed Son.

In this sacred volume, I further read the conduct of thy providence, in preserving the chosen remnant, and in punishing the ungodly and profane. The histories of men are composed by prejudice, and are full of falsehoods. What passeth in my own times is so differently represented by different men; nay, what I have seen myself hath been so variously seen and understood by others; that, were we alike minded to report the truth, our misapprehensions and errors are so many, that by them the same facts would scarce appear to be the same things. But thy record is faithful and true, and spareth not the faults and evils of any man, neither of thy chosen people as a nation, nor of thy dearest children as individuals. Here I see thy constant love of holiness and hatred of sin. Here I read many great lessons of human infirmity, and many strong proofs of thy forbearance, thy justice, or thy mercy. O let me while I read, remember and understand.

In this book of books, I am also instructed by large and various prophecies given forth in deep and mysterious words. By thy holy prophets thou hast indeed

spoken at sundry times, and in divers manners or figures; but all their prophecies, whether by symbol, type, vision, inspiration, or voice, declare but one final purpose, even the salvation of souls by Jesus Christ. His testimony was the very life and spirit of all their predictions.

By other parts of this blessed volume, I am edified and built up in my most holy faith. The final patience and self-renunciation wrought in Job, under thy visitation, instruct me in the way of thy righteousness. The proverbs or similitudes, full of mystic sense under moral ideas, teach me to look unto thee for all my wisdom, grace, and strength. By one book I am convinced of the vanity and vexation of all worldly things; and, by another, of the mysterious height and depth of the love of Christ. I am also taught what to sing and how to sing of thy wonderful praises, by words, which thine own Spirit hath revealed, which millions of thy children have graciously communed with, and which infinitely exceed all the compositions of men. They are words, full of prophecy and vigorous sense, and full of joy in the faithful foresight of the prophecy fulfilled. The love of Christ is the substance, the form, yea, the very life and breath of all thy holy psalms.

In thy gracious gospels, dear Lord, I am taught the accomplishment of every mystery, and of the great work of salvation, covenanted and foretold, in the person, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. O what a picture do they hold forth of the meekness, wisdom, grace, and compassion of that dear Redeemer! Lord, thou knowest how often my heart hath burned within me, when thou hast talked with me by these records, and while thou hast opened to me the scriptures. And yet thou knowest too, how often I have been one of the fools and slow of heart to believe all that thy prophets have spoken. O give me an understanding that is true; and so shall I be taught thy word!

The life, deeds, and writings of thy holy apostles are, in thy blessed hands, most glorious and lively demonstrations of thine everlasting truth. They show me how thy saints have walked; and they encourage me to be a follower of them who now through faith and patience inherit the promises. O my gracious Master, strengthen me, as thou wert pleased to strengthen them, with might by thy Spirit in the inner man; and so shall I hold on and hold out, till I receive, as they have received, the blessed end of my faith in the salvation of my soul! Thou hast also been pleased to close the prophecy, and to seal the vision, with an awful revelation, which reacheth onward to the very ends of time, and almost unveils the mighty majesty of eternity itself. I read this mystic book with solemn awe, and often tremble as I read. Thy grace hath unfolded some little of this important mystery to my mind; O grant me more understanding, so far as may be proper for my welfare, or as my weakness in grace may be able to bear it. Keep me from reading with my own eyes, which are but carnal and cannot profit me, and let me be thy disciple, and thy humble disciple, alone! The ideas of this solemn book are all framed upon the principle of the ancient part of thy volume, and can only be apprehended at all through the intimate analogy of the whole.

O Lord, I bless thee, I daily bless thee, for this wonderful record of life and peace, which, if all men could spiritually read, all men would confess, that it is and could be of no origination but thine. The impressions of divinity are so glorious and evident, that he, that runs, if he hath but eyes, may read and own them. And yet in nothing is this record more true, and in nothing is human experience of it more strong and striking, than in this, that no man can believe or understand a word of it, to the salvation of his soul, unless it be given him from above, unless all his instruction be im-

parted by thee. Not that in thy book there is any defect indeed, but wholly in the gross, sensual, and sinful, apprehension of fallen man.

"Open thou mine eyes, O Lord, and then shall I behold wondrous things from thy Law! "Things hidden to carnal sense, but clear and obvious to the view of that faith, which thou givest to thy children. I wait upon thee for this end. While I read and while I write, while I praise and while I pray, I seek for thine instruction. I am a fool, without thee; but, by thee, I am made wise for eternity. Speak then in thy holy word, for thy servant heareth; and enable me to lay up what I hear, like Mary, within my heart, that I may be a true "scribe indeed, instructed in the kingdom of heaven, bringing forth, out of the treasure of my heart, things new and old."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE RECOLLECTION OF THIS FIRST PART IN PRAYER TO GOD.

O THOU ever blessed Jehovah, three persons in one Godhead, full of grace and full of glory, have mercy upon me a miserable sinner! I am not worthy so much as to look up to the throne of thy holiness, being polluted in my nature, wicked in my life, and covered entirely with innumerable transgressions. But, O, whither, whither, shall I go for help and succour, but unto thee, O Lord, who for these my manifold abominations, art most justly displeased!

Wonderful goodness! Thou hast commanded me to come, and invited me to present myself before thee, with most astonishing testimonies of favor and acceptance. Thou hast found a way to make satisfaction to

thine offended majesty and justice, not by my punishment and ruin so fully deserved, but by the sufferings and death of thy dear Son. By him thou hast magnified thy law and made it honorable through an infinite and perfect righteousness, which he hath completed for it. For these wonderful ends, by thine everlasting covenant he took into his divinity our human flesh, and became our Immanuel, or God with us: And thus he became capable of suffering, doing, and substituting for his people, whom thus he purchased, all that was given him from thee. Having completed this whole work of salvation, he is now ascended up on high, pleading and interceding for poor sinners, that they might be partakers of his glory. O how great was his love; stronger indeed than death; mightier than sin and Satan; yea, almighty to redeem!

Holy Father, how great also was thy love in sparing thine own Son from heaven for guilty worms, and yet in not sparing him upon earth, when bearing their nature and transgressions! I am overwhelmed with a sense of thine unutterable benignity and compassion, joined as it is with everlasting justice, purity, and truth.

And, thou blessed Spirit, what do I owe unto thee, for all thy gracious work in my poor heart, enslaved as it was by sin, and by nature departed as it is from all righteousness! Thou hast taken of the things of Jesus, and explained, and enforced, and enlivened them into my soul. By thee alone, I have heard, and believed, all the mysteries of redemption, needful for me to know. By thee I have experienced some of them; and by thine aid I hope to experience more. Be with me throughout my pilgrimage, and, in these days of rebuke and blasphemy against thy person, O grant me the evidence of thy presence, by enabling me to abound in every word and work for thy glory.

O thou blessed Trinity! Thou Three One Jehovah! God in covenant for redeemed sinners! God

in truth over all the world! hear and regard my prayer. Accept and sanctify my praise. I adore thee for all thine abundant mercy. I glorify thee, O Father, Son and Spirit, equal in nature, love, and majesty, with earnest, though poor returns of gratitude and praise. Receive me, and whatever I am and have, graciously for Jesus' sake, who is my Master, my Savior, my Priest, my Prophet, my King, my Lord, and my All, and also thine only Son, in whom thou art well pleased for ever.

Lord, I am frail and full of wants. I am a poor, weak, despised, and despicable man; and yet thine own adopted child notwithstanding. Give, O give me the bread of life; lighten my dim eyes with the light of life; and supply all my need, great and various as it truly is, according to thy riches in glory by Christ Jesus! I bring a thousand and a thousand wants, imperfections, and cares before thee; and, Lord, I can bring no other. These, and such as these, are all I have both in body and in soul. O then take me as I am, and make me what thou wouldst have me to be. I know not of myself what is right, or good, or wise; but thou knowest: Therefore, I beseech thee, my blessed God, undertake even for me! I have no refuge, but in thy power; I have no hope, but in thy promises; and I desire nothing in this world, no, nor in the world to come, but the sweetness, the testimony, the possession, the glory, of thy great salvation.

O let the evidence of this salvation be made more and more clear to my mind, and the experience of it more and more firm and solid to my soul, through thy word and by thy Spirit. May I read, and understand; may I understand, and grow; till I come to the stature and measure appointed for me. Keep me from leaning on myself, lest I fall into error. Help me to depend upon thee, that I may be led into all the truth! So shall I praise thee with joyful lips, and, through my gracious Savior, bless and adore thee, O God, my God, for ever and ever!

THE CHRISTIAN REMEMBRANCER.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

UPON UNBELIEF.

THE corruption of our nature renders the life and exercise of faith the most difficult affair in the world. It is indeed far beyond ourselves. The apostle, therefore, ascribes our believing, to the exceeding greatness of God's power, even to the effectual working of his mighty power.

Many talk of this believing, and yet but few have attained it. The assenting to a chain of principles is easy; but the grounding of the heart in these principles upon Christ, and especially in the times of trial; the giving up a man's self, as nothing; the patient waiting of the soul upon the truth and promise of God; the cool and deliberate parting with the things of sense for the things of the Spirit; the discovery and suppression of the carnal and corrupt motives in the heart; all these are matters, which are neither in the compass, nor taste, nor inclination of flesh and blood.

Hence it is, that, when men are made serious by affliction, sickness, or the approach of death, they find themselves so much at a loss for the use of that faith, which perhaps, from a long profession, they did not suspect they had wanted. O it is dreadful to be in the dark, when we want the most light, and to have no assurance of everlasting things, when we are called to part for ever with the things of time.

The soul, indeed, that never doubted, hath never yet believed, The office of faith being to subdue unbelief

in all its activities; this often makes a sore and difficult conflict in the soul. Carnal reason looks for the demonstrations of sense, and cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God; for these being in their nature out of its comprehension, they appear foolishness unto it; and therefore this weak and fleshly reason cannot bring a strong and living confidence to the soul. Faith is chiefly occupied in things above animal sense, and often against it; but reason, beginning with ignorance, and proceeding upon doubt, seeks its rest in sensation, and can rise no higher. A man, therefore, cannot be reasoned by natural deductions and convictions out of unbelief into faith, but must be saved, through the gift and working of the divine power, first to possess faith, and afterwards to use it.

The mind likewise can never subdue its distressing doubts by its own exercise, but only by the gracious help of God: and the very looking for this help is from faith. Faith brings indeed its proper evidences with it; but these are all in the divine record, which, by the demonstration of the Spirit, answers the ignorant objections of carnal reason, and (what is vastly beyond the power of all the reason in the world) at once silences, satisfies, comforts, and renews the mind. Thus faith relies, and the Spirit testifies; and this conjunction of what the soul is enabled to yield with what in that act it immediately receives, constitutes that full abundance of certitude, which should be the grand aim of the children of God. "After ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the *earnest* of our inheritance."

This is not the work of a day. Conflicts and exercises are repeated continually; because, while flesh remains in the believer, it will be unbelieving flesh, ever expecting sensation instead of faith, which is directly contrary to God's method of salvation. Man fell by disbelieving; and he is raised again through believing.

He is to trust God for every thing, before he can have the true enjoyment of any.

Faith doth not take away all doubting, because it doth not take away the body, nor the indwelling of sin in that body; but it subdues the reigning fury and the raging prevalence of doubting. It constantly attacks the body of sin, which is the grand cause of doubting. Sometimes, it gives the Christian such clear views, as make him wonder, how he could doubt at all. And yet the doubting will again and again return, though perhaps with less frequency and strength. Its sudden attacks however are very distressing: and these are permitted of God, in order to show, that the soul is not to live by any thing imparted to it here, but simply and continually by that faith, which leads the soul out of itself to God in all its views and desires.

This is a difficult, though a daily lesson. Lord, teach it thy servant; or the knowledge will be too excellent and sublime for him to attain it! Let it be also not a lesson of theory and notion only, but of practice and experience, that I may become skilful in the word of righteousness, and know how to repel by it the sad assaults, which while I am here, will daily be made against me. "O let thy mercies come to me, O Lord; even thy salvation according to thy word: so shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me, for I trust in thy word!"

CHAPTER II.

HOW HAVE I RECEIVED CHRIST?

THE apostle says, "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." I must therefore receive him, before I can walk at all. It is a matter of the deepest consequence to my soul, that I should do both.

How then, Lord, did I receive thee? Did I seek thee first, by my own will? Alas, I was gone out of the way, like all other men; I was altogether become abominable, having no will for good, but only for evil. Did I resolve to seek thee by my best endeavors? I must confess, with shame and sorrow, that my resolutions were weaker to me than Samson's bands were in his full strength to him; and that the first or the least temptation led me away. Could my sincere obedience merit thy favor? I see, that if a man could sincerely obey in his natural state, but which indeed he cannot, having no love to the work, but only a slavish fear of hell; Lord, I see that thy law requires, if I would be saved by thy law, a sinless and perfect obedience, instead of this sincere and defective one, upon pain of my utter destruction. Thou hast said in thy word that "he who offendeth in one point is guilty of all," and that "by the deeds of the law shall no man living be justified." How then could I, who have offended in so many points, be saved? How then didst thou, in thy righteousness, bring me to expect salvation?

Lord, I was poor, and vile, and miserable; I was helpless, yet laden with iniquities; I was wounded, and lying in my blood; my case and condition no man knew, or knowing it, could relieve. In the midst of my misery, was the appointed moment of thy

mercy. Into my deepest wounds thou didst pour thy oil and thy wine. Thou alone cheeredst my heart with thy free salvation. In the view of what Christ had done and suffered for poor sinners like me, and by thy gracious power applying his twofold merit; joy and gladness came into my soul, yea, greater than any found by men of the earth, "when their corn, and wine, and oil have increased."

Thy word was the instrument, and thy Spirit the worker. He new created me in Christ Jesus; he renewed me in the Spirit of my mind; he made darkness light before me, and rough places plain. By his teaching I know thy truth, by his grace I enjoy it, by his power I am kept therein, and shall be kept, I trust, to the end. Lord, all the glory of my conversion wrought in me, and of thy complete salvation wrought for me, wholly belongeth unto thee from beginning to end!

It was in this way I received Christ; and thy word, O Lord, assureth me it is the true way; because it giveth to thee all the glory, and secures to me all the benefit. In this way of humbly receiving, I must also walk continually. I have nothing of my own, but sin. Thou hast nothing, O my Redeemer, but grace and mercy for thy people. Help me to receive out of this eternal fulness, grace for grace, according to my need, that I may walk unto all well-pleasing, and adorn thy doctrine in all things. I would love much, because much hath been forgiven me. I would serve heartily, because thou hast kindly done great things indeed for me. I would live holily, because it is the way to thy kingdom, and the very happiness of thy kingdom itself. Let, let me, my Savior, be more like unto thee; for, Lord, I would be thine, and only thine, for ever!

Thus my heart often venteth its desires; though at times it is unsteady, dull, and ready to droop, under

cut off from thy grace in his soul; while his body received the seeds of dissolution, and began to die, from that very hour. I also am instructed to see thy mercy, proclaiming a Redeemer in the midst of thy justice, which otherwise must have destroyed, or made wretched without remedy, my whole race. Thou ordainedst a covenant by sacrifice with the first believers, showing thereby in type and shadow the great atonement of Jesus Christ, who, by thine own everlasting covenant, was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. By faith in this propitiation, they offered up their spiritual sacrifices, when they presented before thee the appointed creatures; and "according to this faith they died, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

By this holy word I also learn, how, for the dreadful impieties of the old world, thou broughtest on a flood upon the earth, destroying all mankind but the small remnant of one family. My eyes have seen abundant testimonies of this truth, within the bowels as well as upon the face of this globe; in beholding, what once lived upon the surface at great depths beneath, and what once inhabited the seas upon the tops of the highest mountains.

By thy blessed record I understand, that thou madest a covenant with Noah and Abraham, and the other patriarchs, promising the great Savior to them and their seed. Thou didst suffer their offspring to go down into Egypt, and broughtest them up again with thy mighty hand, that by this thou mightest proclaim a more gracious deliverance to thy people. The plagues of Egypt were strong emblems of the curses and evils, which sin brings upon the souls of all men by nature; and thy visitations of Israel were likewise representations of thy conduct in grace towards all thy redeemed.

Thou deliverest to this day thy people from the world and the devil, by the blood of the paschal Lamb, and sendest them forth from their power, to become sojourners as in a wilderness, and to seek a better country and a heavenly.

Thou didst appoint all the rites and ceremonies of the holy law to show forth the Savior's love, life, and death, till he should come. They are lively prophecies, and wise memorials, of what he was to be, and to do, and to suffer, for the salvation of poor sinners. No mind, but thine, could have contrived such a long train of mysterious truths, which were all to be fulfilled; no power, but thine, could have established and accomplished them all from age to age; no love but thine, could have undertaken salvation at so costly an expense, as the sufferings and death of thy blessed Son.

In this sacred volume, I further read the conduct of thy providence, in preserving the chosen remnant, and in punishing the ungodly and profane. The histories of men are composed by prejudice, and are full of falsehoods. What passeth in my own times is so differently represented by different men; nay, what I have seen myself hath been so variously seen and understood by others; that, were we alike minded to report the truth, our misapprehensions and errors are so many, that by them the same facts would scarce appear to be the same things. But thy record is faithful and true, and spareth not the faults and evils of any man, neither of thy chosen people as a nation, nor of thy dearest children as individuals. Here I see thy constant love of holiness and hatred of sin. Here I read many great lessons of human infirmity, and many strong proofs of thy forbearance, thy justice, or thy mercy. O let me while I read, remember and understand.

In this book of books, I am also instructed by large and various prophecies given forth in deep and mysterious words. By thy holy prophets thou hast indeed

pendeth for vigor upon corruptible things. It is therefore a hidden life. "Ye are dead (says the apostle) and your life is hid with Christ in God." No outward or carnal eye can see it at all, except in some of its holy outward effects, the true excellence of which it cannot apprehend; and the spiritual understanding of other believers can only discern its inward truth and growth, but in proportion as they themselves are spiritually grown up in Christ Jesus the Lord.

As thou art not to live upon thyself, O my soul, so thou canst not live this true life by the aid or opinion of others. If they are instruments of good to thee, it is thy heavenly Father, who employeth them for that end. They themselves must live upon him, as well as thou, for all their wisdom, grace, and strength, and not by the life of their own hand. Christ is and must be as much their life, as he is thine.

Thou sometimes waxest and wanest in thy duties, as the moon in her light. At one time, thou art full of spiritual appetite and vigor; at another, in lowness and want of strength. The cause is not in the Sun of righteousness, who is always alike; but in thee, who turnest not the same aspect always to him, and therefore hast not always the same light and heat. If thou thinkest to get brightness from the stars around thee, instead of thy Sun; thou wilt be like the dark part of the moon turned away from the natural Sun, which often scarce appears, or, when it doth, appears very dull. In all providence, ordinances, and situations, Christ must be thy point of view, thy succor, thy light, thy life, and thy all; or they will be found, however excellent in his hand, only beggarly elements in thine.

In all things that are truly divine and spiritual, the flesh soon becomes weary, and flags, and fails. When the exercise grows difficult especially, then corrupt nature soon declines, and cannot sustain or endure the toil. Hence it is, that so many seem to receive the

The life, deeds, and writings of thy holy apostles are, in thy blessed hands, most glorious and lively demonstrations of thine everlasting truth. They show me how thy saints have walked; and they encourage me to be a follower of them who now through faith and patience inherit the promises. O my gracious Master, strengthen me, as thou wert pleased to strengthen them, with might by thy Spirit in the inner man; and so shall I hold on and hold out, till I receive, as they have received, the blessed end of my faith in the salvation of my soul! Thou hast also been pleased to close the prophecy, and to seal the vision, with an awful revelation, which reacheth onward to the very ends of time, and almost unveils the mighty majesty of eternity itself. I read this mystic book with solemn awe, and often tremble as I read. Thy grace hath unfolded some little of this important mystery to my mind; O grant me more understanding, so far as may be proper for my welfare, or as my weakness in grace may be able to bear it. Keep me from reading with my own eyes, which are but carnal and cannot profit me, and let me be thy disciple, and thy humble disciple, alone! The ideas of this solemn book are all framed upon the principle of the ancient part of thy volume, and can only be apprehended at all through the intimate analogy of the whole.

O Lord, I bless thee, I daily bless thee, for this wonderful record of life and peace, which, if all men could spiritually read, all men would confess, that it is and could be of no origination but thine. The impressions of divinity are so glorious and evident, that he, that runs, if he hath but eyes, may read and own them. And yet in nothing is this record more true, and in nothing is human experience of it more strong and striking, than in this, that no man can believe or understand a word of it, to the salvation of his soul, unless it be given him from above, unless all his instruction be im-

parted by thee. Not that in thy book there is any defect indeed, but wholly in the gross, sensual, and sinful, apprehension of fallen man.

"Open thou mine eyes, O Lord, and then shall I behold wondrous things from thy Law! "Things hidden to carnal sense, but clear and obvious to the view of that faith, which thou givest to thy children. I wait upon thee for this end. While I read and while I write, while I praise and while I pray, I seek for thine instruction. I am a fool, without thee; but, by thee, I am made wise for eternity. Speak then in thy holy word, for thy servant heareth; and enable me to lay up what I hear, like Mary, within my heart, that I may be a true "scribe indeed, instructed in the kingdom of heaven, bringing forth, out of the treasure of my heart, things new and old."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE RECOLLECTION OF THIS FIRST PART IN PRAYER TO GOD.

O THOU ever blessed Jehovah, three persons in one Godhead, full of grace and full of glory, have mercy upon me a miserable sinner! I am not worthy so much as to look up to the throne of thy holiness, being polluted in my nature, wicked in my life, and covered entirely with innumerable transgressions. But, O, whither, whither, shall I go for help and succour, but unto thee, O Lord, who for these my manifold abominations, art most justly displeased!

Wonderful goodness! Thou hast commanded me to come, and invited me to present myself before thee, with most astonishing testimonies of favor and acceptance. Thou hast found a way to make satisfaction to

thine offended majesty and justice, not by my punishment and ruin so fully deserved, but by the sufferings and death of thy dear Son. By him thou hast magnified thy law and made it honorable through an infinite and perfect righteousness, which he hath completed for it. For these wonderful ends, by thine everlasting covenant he took into his divinity our human flesh, and became our Immanuel, or God with us: And thus he became capable of suffering, doing, and substituting for his people, whom thus he purchased, all that was given him from thee. Having completed this whole work of salvation, he is now ascended up on high, pleading and interceding for poor sinners, that they might be partakers of his glory. O how great was his love; stronger indeed than death; mightier than sin and Satan; yea, almighty to redeem!

Holy Father, how great also was thy love in sparing thine own Son from heaven for guilty worms, and yet in not sparing him upon earth, when bearing their nature and transgressions! I am overwhelmed with a sense of thine unutterable benignity and compassion, joined as it is with everlasting justice, purity, and truth.

And, thou blessed Spirit, what do I owe unto thee, for all thy gracious work in my poor heart, enslaved as it was by sin, and by nature departed as it is from all righteousness! Thou hast taken of the things of Jesus, and explained, and enforced, and enlivened them into my soul. By thee alone, I have heard, and believed, all the mysteries of redemption, needful for me to know. By thee I have experienced some of them; and by thine aid I hope to experience more. Be with me throughout my pilgrimage, and, in these days of rebuke and blasphemy against thy person, O grant me the evidence of thy presence, by enabling me to abound in every word and work for thy glory.

O thou blessed Trinity! Thou Three One Jehovah! God in covenant for redeemed sinners! God

in truth over all the world! hear and regard my prayer. Accept and sanctify my praise. I adore thee for all thine abundant mercy. I glorify thee, O Father, Son and Spirit, equal in nature, love, and majesty, with earnest, though poor returns of gratitude and praise. Receive me, and whatever I am and have, graciously for Jesus' sake, who is my Master, my Savior, my Priest, my Prophet, my King, my Lord, and my All, and also thine only Son, in whom thou art well pleased for ever.

Lord, I am frail and full of wants. I am a poor, weak, despised, and despicable man; and yet thine own adopted child notwithstanding. Give, O give me the bread of life; lighten my dim eyes with the light of life; and supply all my need, great and various as it truly is, according to thy riches in glory by Christ Jesus! I bring a thousand and a thousand wants, imperfections, and cares before thee; and, Lord, I can bring no other. These, and such as these, are all I have both in body and in soul. O then take me as I am, and make me what thou wouldst have me to be. I know not of myself what is right, or good, or wise; but thou knowest: Therefore, I beseech thee, my blessed God, undertake even for me! I have no refuge, but in thy power; I have no hope, but in thy promises; and I desire nothing in this world, no, nor in the world to come, but the sweetness, the testimony, the possession, the glory, of thy great salvation.

O let the evidence of this salvation be made more and more clear to my mind, and the experience of it more and more firm and solid to my soul, through thy word and by thy Spirit. May I read, and understand; may I understand, and grow; till I come to the stature and measure appointed for me. Keep me from leaning on myself, lest I fall into error. Help me to depend upon thee, that I may be led into all the truth! So shall I praise thee with joyful lips, and, through my gracious Savior, bless and adore thee, O God, my God, for ever and ever!

THE CHRISTIAN REMEMBRANCER.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

UPON UNBELIEF.

THE corruption of our nature renders the life and exercise of faith the most difficult affair in the world. It is indeed far beyond ourselves. The apostle, therefore, ascribes our believing, to the exceeding greatness of God's power, even to the effectual working of his mighty power.

Many talk of this believing, and yet but few have attained it. The assenting to a chain of principles is easy; but the grounding of the heart in these principles upon Christ, and especially in the times of trial; the giving up a man's self, as nothing; the patient waiting of the soul upon the truth and promise of God; the cool and deliberate parting with the things of sense for the things of the Spirit; the discovery and suppression of the carnal and corrupt motives in the heart; all these are matters, which are neither in the compass, nor taste, nor inclination of flesh and blood.

Hence it is, that, when men are made serious by affliction, sickness, or the approach of death, they find themselves so much at a loss for the use of that faith, which perhaps, from a long profession, they did not suspect they had wanted. O it is dreadful to be in the dark, when we want the most light, and to have no assurance of everlasting things, when we are called to part for ever with the things of time.

The soul, indeed, that never doubted, hath never yet believed, The office of faith being to subdue unbelief

to the will of God; others for outward usefulness in the church; and others for an inward and spiritual life of communion with God. But all these are the various gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will, and not the talents or abilities of fallen nature.—They are also given to every man, who hath them to profit withal, according to his place in the church or in the world. He, who hath one of these graces, should not undervalue or despise him, who hath another; for the giver is the same, though his gifts may be granted for different ends.

Very often particular graces are bestowed to counteract and oppose particular corruptions, of which the Lord himself can be the only true judge. Some situations of christians require gifts of grace, which might be less necessary, or less manifestative of the divine glory in them, than they would be in others. The Lord distributeth wisely and kindly to all his people, according to their day and duty, or according to his own designs in them and for them. But they are all of them his workmanship, and could, not more in grace than in nature, either create or fashion themselves.

This should teach thee, my fellow christian, a lesson of forbearance to thy brethren. It is not right for thee to judge another by thine own pattern. He may have graces, not less pleasing to God, nor less useful in their purpose, than those which are given to thee. Art thou a warm and active christian? condemn not him, whose endowments may be more placid and contemplative than thine. He who now creeps as a snail in humble silence, may, by one lift of divine power, get into heaven before thee, and perhaps be raised higher there than thou. God judgeth not like man, according to the outward show, but according to the secret riches of his love. Art thou a quiet and retired believer? Do not censure him, who is called forth to more stirring duty, than thou art. Though his work may seem less spi-

He is to trust God for every thing, before he can have the true enjoyment of any.

Faith doth not take away all doubting, because it doth not take away the body, nor the indwelling of sin in that body; but it subdues the reigning fury and the raging prevalence of doubting. It constantly attacks the body of sin, which is the grand cause of doubting. Sometimes, it gives the Christian such clear views, as make him wonder, how he could doubt at all. And yet the doubting will again and again return, though perhaps with less frequency and strength. Its sudden attacks however are very distressing: and these are permitted of God, in order to show, that the soul is not to live by any thing imparted to it here, but simply and continually by that faith, which leads the soul out of itself to God in all its views and desires.

This is a difficult, though a daily lesson. Lord, teach it thy servant; or the knowledge will be too excellent and sublime for him to attain it! Let it be also not a lesson of theory and notion only, but of practice and experience, that I may become skilful in the word of righteousness, and know how to repel by it the sad assaults, which while I am here, will daily be made against me. "O let thy mercies come to me, O Lord; even thy salvation according to thy word: so shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me, for I trust in thy word!"

over my soul. Suavis hora, brevis mora: Short and sweet was the hour of my spiritual delight, but the time of my dulness and drooping hath been frequent and long.

Blessed be thy name, O Lord, that my real state with thee doth not depend upon my vigor, liveliness, and constancy, but upon those only sure grounds, thy faithfulness, mercy, omnipotence, and truth. Whatever I am or may be in myself, thou art and wilt be always the same, and always the same to me.

The time, or rather the eternity, is at hand, when my state will be unchangeable, and my frames will be unchangeable too. The crowns of glory cannot fade; nor those, that wear them, alter or decay. I shall both know, as I am known, and in all things shall be like to my immutable and glorious Savior, when I get into his kingdom.

Why then should my present variations distress me? I live not by them, nor for them, but upon a higher principle, and for a more exalted end. This is the time of faith, in which I must wrestle, and labor, and strive, against all the disadvantages of an evil nature, and an evil world; and I am to look for strength from Christ, who will be honored in my weakness and deficiency, which compel me to give up myself incessantly to him. He is engaged to preserve me by his own oath and unchangeable covenant; and therefore, come fair, come foul; let me have either comfort or sorrow; all must be well at the last, for he hath promised, and most assuredly will give me, a safe and abundant entrance into heaven.

CHAPTER VII.

ON BRIDLING THE TONGUE.

It hath been a frequent confession of wise and good men, that they have often lamented their speaking too much, but seldom their holding the tongue. In the multitude of words, there will be some folly, something that will not tend to edification, something that may rather weary and offend, than delight and inform.

This evil of over speaking usually comes from an over weening opinion of self. Unchastised and unsubdued self is fond of its own display; although it can display nothing, or, were it not deceiving and deceived, nothing but its own wretchedness and ruin. The apostle hath a striking hint for professors of religion: "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

What is our *end* in religious conversation? If we speak without a purpose, surely it is folly. If we speak for our own praise, it is a wrong to our own souls, and a robbery of God. If we speak for his honor, and the edification of others, we should look up to him for his blessing, that our words, as they ought, may be weighty and wise. In this humble dependence upon God, and with a warm and generous concern for the spiritual welfare of others, our discourse may be comfortable and edifying, both to them and to ourselves. The more of this kind of conference, the better; care being taken of the spirit in which we speak, of the time and propriety of speaking, and of not mixing other things (as it is too often the case) with our religious discourse, which may render it trifling or unsavory. When we have said all that we

could wish to say upon things divine, it will be profitable to withdraw, that there may be a due opportunity for reflection, meditation, digestion, and prayer.

CHAPTER VIII.

UPON FALSE APPEARANCES.

THE whole world walketh in a masquerade, or, as the scripture calls it, *an image*, or *vain show*. Scarce any man would appear as he is, but as he is not, before others; and he loves to indulge even his own mind in the same deceitful view of himself. The more artfully he can put on the veil, the finer man he seems, often in his own esteem, generally in the esteem of others; and nothing mortifies him more than when some wind of trial blows this veil but a little aside, so that others perceive a part at least of what he hath been always very industrious to conceal.

This disguise is the handy work of evil and corrupted nature, fallen from the truth and purity of God, into a strong love and likeness of the perplexed and foolish subtlety, which fully occupies that being, who is the father and author of lies from the beginning. To plead for this dissimulation, as some have done, is to turn advocate for the evil one, whose fees are vanity and vexation in this world, and something worse in the world to come.

Our depraved nature cannot bear to see its own wickedness, and much less to have it exposed. What shifts and turns, what labors and difficulties, will it not encounter, to obtain a great name and opinion, though it be but a false one? And how will it be delighted, as with a prize, in the fleeting breath of dying creatures,

who have only for a memorial of themselves some filthy monument of sin or of shame? To be open and sincere, is counted a weakness; because it lowers a man's power of taking those advantages for interest and fame, which all men by nature are pursuing, and which, in a state of nature, they think to be the only object worth pursuing, as the highest and greatest good.

And, alas, how much of this disguise is brought into the things and church of God! I lament, for one, how prone I am to cheat myself, and to wish more for the esteem of others, than I ought to think of, or than I can possibly deserve! I would be all fair and valuable, and excellent, and what not, in their esteem, while I am conscious to myself, that there is within me so much vanity, weakness, dulness, wretchedness, and evil, as might justly suffice to render me in their eyes, what any of them, that can look into themselves, must appear to be in their own.

I have displeased some, whom I did not intend to displease; and others have offended me, perhaps with a contrary intention: The same persons and myself have been mutually satisfied at one time, and dissatisfied at another; and wherefore? Not because my nature or theirs was better or worse at any time; but only because it sometimes discovered itself more according to the occasion: And when it drops the disguise of goodness which we can regard, or discovers itself too plainly; sinners as we are, we cannot love it, so odious and depraved is it become since the original ruin. We cannot love it in others, nor others because of it; though we are at a world of pains to conceal, to indulge, or to dress off the ugly monster in ourselves.

It is this depravity, which hath begotten hypocrisy not only in the world at large, or in courts, or particular callings of men, where certainly it doth reign absolutely and universally, but also in religious profes-

sion, where surely it ought not. It hath reigned especially in this last, since it hath been esteemed a scandal not to be called a Christian. It is true, indeed, that the appearance of religion is certainly better than the appearance of evil; but however when men seek to appear religious, for the selfish honor or carnal comfort which may follow from others upon account of it, they only seek themselves, and are but the less truly religious for all their professions.

Why am I grieved, if others think lightly of my gracious attainments?—Because I am grown unjustly great in my own esteem for things, which are not my own, but given to me. But doth not this very grief prove, that their judgment is but too right, and that my real stature is not so tall as I think it? If I were humbled in myself, in some degree as I ought to be (for, in the full and just degree, no man can be humbled in this life) I should approve their sincerity towards me, and contentedly sit down before them in the lowest room. Their low opinion would not hurt me, because it would be the same as my own. The vileness of my heart, and the low progress I have made in Christian experience, are indeed sufficient to humble me every day I breathe; and it is only my own blindness, or a falseness to myself, that leads me to forget either my own real condition, or the place where I ought to stand.

We are not naturally honest to ourselves; and we do not wish that others should deal honestly with us. If we were truly honest and wise (and grace only can make us so in any degree) we should meekly hear, and even wish to hear, of our own frailties, errors, and defects, that we might grow the true Christian growth, which does not consist in the favorable opinion of men and of our own minds; but in lowliness of heart, and spirituality of life, respecting ourselves; in patience,

quietness, and good will, with regard to others; in contrition, humiliation, and submission before God.

Professors live too much outwardly. Religion is carried often into the strong animal passions, not to subdue but to feed them. Hence the poor anger and violence of a corrupted nature are frequently mistaken for zeal, for life, and for power. But noise, and bustle, and tumult, and hurry; the agitations of temper, and strong concerns for influence, or authority, or direction, among men; the parade of religion, or the superiority of a party; may all be carried on with very small degrees of real grace, and perhaps with none at all. If we do not live for God in our religion, we must live outwardly, and so shall endeavor to make a fair show in the flesh; but if we have his presence indeed, the truest part of our life will be hidden, and we shall much and gladly retire within to enjoy it. The most certain sign of our real growth will be, the sinking into ourselves as vileness and nothing; the being thought meanly of, with content, if not with pleasure; and the rising up of our souls towards God with secret delight, ardor, affection, and constancy. All this may be done before Him, who seeth in secret, far better than in the corners of the streets, or places of public resort. We shall aim, through grace, to be gracious, rather than to appear so.

This hidden life my soul pants for, O Lord, thou knowest; whatever becomes of my outward respect among men. If I have the more of thee for the loss of this, it will be indeed a rich amends. Nay, it will be better for me to be without human regards, lest I should grow more proud than I already am, and so lose that sight of thee, which I always enjoy most sweetly and clearly, in the deepest renunciation and depression of myself. O make me more and more dead to the opinion of even gracious men, that my poverty and meanness may ever be before me, and

that I may constantly be relinquishing myself in all forms and circumstances, so that I may have more inward and intimate fellowship, friendship, complacency, and nearness with thee!

Careless, myself a dying man,
Of dying men's esteem;
Happy, O Lord, if thou approve,
Though all beside condemn.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD.

NOTHING more fully proves the fall of man from his original creation, than the opposition and temper of his soul, while in his natural state, to the things of God. His wishes, his hopes, his labors, his principles of action and thinking, are all turned directly to another way. God is not really (whatever a man of the world may speculate) in all his thoughts. He is without God, or rather, in sober truth, he is (as the apostle calls him) an atheist in the world.

Hence it is, that the people of the world have, in all ages, reputed the people of God either to be fools, in not laying themselves out for such things as wholly engage themselves, or knavish hypocrites, who only take a pretended spiritual method to accomplish the same carnal and selfish ends. And if they can find an instance or two (as they often have done and may do) to confirm this opinion, O how do they exult over professors of all kinds, and run down religion itself, as though it were a trap or an engine for all manner of deceit, or at best a whimsical paradise, framed by superstition for dunces and fools!

On the other hand, how wild, mad, besotted, and phrenetic, do all the agitations of these men seem to the Christian, in his retired and considerate hours? They are pursuing, in his view, lies and shadows, vapours and dreams. They grasp after something, they scarce know what. Ever restless, they are always upon the hunt; but never finding, never satisfied. They live weary and tired lives, full of envy, disappointment, and care: and they die hopeless deaths, either in abject terror at what may come upon them hereafter, or in the stupid opinion, that God created them only to live like maggots upon the trash of the earth, and then at last to be thrown into a hole to rot away into nothing. Such is the sordid spirit and wisdom of this world!

CHAPTER X.

ON THE PRIDE OF THE HEART.

MOST of the discomforts of our lives arise from the pride of our hearts, unmortified and unsubdued. Did I think as meanly and humbly of myself, as from the knowledge of my weakness and sinfulness I ought; the contempt or the insult of others would not hurt or afflict me. But I am false to myself, and therefore lifted up, assuming to my vile nature what it hath no right to expect; and I am false to others, wearing appearances to create respect and esteem, which is walking in a mask, and rendering myself foolishly proud. If men saw me, and I saw them as we really are; we should none of us be much inclined to boast of ourselves; but our glorying must either cease, or else be wholly in the Lord.

This pride hath occasioned to my soul a world of trouble, both when it hath reigned unsubdued, and while, through grace and trials, it hath been in the acts of subduing.

When it is unsubdued, the heart is open to all manner of mortifications. A look, a gesture, or a word shall put it to pain; and when this pain rages, the passions will begin to rave, and throw the whole frame into miserable violence and disorder. Outward opposition will make it worse. The inflammation then grows often to a degree of phrenzy, which nothing hardly, can soothe or allay. And it is one of the wonders of providence, that this pride of man, when combined and raging in multitudes, doth not confound all order and rules, more than it doth, and utterly ruin and destroy the world.

To subdue this sore evil, in his people, is one great end of God in afflicting dispensations. They are high in themselves; and it is necessary for their good, that they should be brought down. Whatever answers this end, come in what shape it may, it is all a blessing.

Did such an one use me ill, or speak contemptuously of me? As David said of Shemei, it is because the Lord hath permitted him. Hath he treated me as I deserve? Why then am I angry? He hath been to me a messenger of truth, whatever were his intentions, with which I have nothing to do; and, therefore, let me own the truth, and fall down in abasement and contrition before God. Is the censure false? I have no right to be offended: he hath not hit me, but himself, and becomes therefore the object of my prayer. If in this instance, his condemnation hath been wrong; my heart knoweth in how many others, and perhaps in worse, it would have been just and right. In every view, I have no fair claim to be flattered with the applauses of men, but to be humbled in myself for all the weakness, worthlessness, and evil, that cleave to

me in all things. If I felt this as I ought, and walked as I ought in the continual sense of it, I should be ashamed to be proud, and should abhor myself for the bold injustice and iniquity of being so, in dust and ashes.

I believe that some Christians have more trials and afflictions in the flesh than others, because there is more natural stubbornness of pride and wilfulness in them. The Lord will have these to be subdued. And he suiteth all his chastisements with great and unerring wisdom to the occasion. If they thought of this aright, they would not be so much in care to get rid of the visitation, as to have the design of it answered within them. They would pray to be humbled under the mighty hand of God, that he might exalt them in the right way, and in the due time.

It is my pride, and my self-will, which proceeds from pride, that renders me so uneasy with God and others. Were I truly lowly, and deeply sensible of my own condition, not the opinion and hard words of others, but my own sin, would offend me. I am imperfect, as in all other graces, so especially in humility; and therefore I fret in myself, and am inclined to speak and to render evil for evil. O Lord, help me, a poor feeble man, and hide pride from mine eyes! Suffer me not to fall upon this stumbling block, which hath overturned the world; but help me to follow Jesus, who was meek and lowly in heart, and by him find rest to my soul!

CHAPTER XI.

COMPARISON BETWEEN CARNAL AND SPIRITUAL WISDOM.

CARNAL wisdom is the highest attainment of the carnal mind. It is an exhibition of fallen man in his fairest and most cultivated form; and is therefore the aim and desire of the best of natural men.

This wisdom, (for we will call it at present by that name,) arising from a depraved and corrupt principle, is necessarily weak and corrupt likewise. It seeks earthly and carnal things, is occupied entirely upon them, and looks no higher, and finds no more, when left to its own inclinations and powers. This wisdom, therefore, is called in the scripture, earthly, sensual, devilish. It acts only upon and for this present world: It is plunged in the sensuality and designs of it through an earthly, evil nature: It is like Satan, in total opposition to the will and holiness of God; serving, as its last end, the creature, instead of the Creator.

Thus the learned man is proud of his knowledge, as it gives him superiority over others: The statesman, by his political understanding, pursues and triumphs in his own grandeur: The merchant, by his skill in trade, heaps up to himself riches: The mechanic, by his art and ingenuity, assumes his peculiar distinction: The carnal divine, (for such an one there may be,) is learned, and zealous for his party or profession, or for his own carnal exaltation in it. In short, it is no matter whether the means be high or low, but every man of every condition employs all his understanding, and all his powers, for carnal views, for earthly glory, and for temporal attainments. If his plans are calculated for these, and especially if they succeed, he is admired,

applauded, and admitted to be a great, a wise, or an extraordinary man.

But alas! how vain and perishing, how delusive and unsatisfactory is this short-lived wisdom, and all that it can seek after or find! To what purpose are the eager, wearisome toils and cares, the studious anxieties and restless pursuits, of all the millions of mortals in ages past, whose airy glory is forgotten, and whose very names are extinguished and lost? And, if not lost and extinguished, yet of what value or consequence are they now, beyond the fleeting idea and imagination of mortals like themselves? And to how few, even in this last poor way, doth the remembrance extend? And how unknown and insignificant is all this to the owners, whose very image is departed from the world on which they doted?

This is the highest prize of all earthly wisdom; and is not this perfectly fanciful, fleeting, trivial, and vain? In the grave all its thoughts perish, equally with the low notions and opinions of the ignorant and the foolish, the poor and the despised.

But there is a WISDOM, which (unlike the other) deserves the name; and, being no production of this corrupted earth, but coming from above, is pure and spiritual in its nature; and, in all its purposes and effects, true, real, lasting, and happy.

Its origin is in grace from HIM, who is the Fountain of wisdom. And its first effect is in the renunciation and abasement of self, as that which is false and contrary. Thus the fear of the Lord is the beginning, or first fruits, which the soul can present, of wisdom; and thus a man must become a fool, that he may be wise. This wisdom sees the ignorance of all other pretended wisdom, detects its base and grovelling pursuits, and lifts up the soul, not to a temporary dying fame, which is often infamy with God, but to a solid and perpetual good. It discovers the deceivable-

ness of unrighteousness in the heart and in the world, the poorness of every thing out of Christ, and the great value of Christ and of the soul above all other things. It doth not lift up a man in himself, as a great and glorious doctor, for human admiration; but it makes him low in his own eyes, through a view of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord; and it keeps him from aiming at vain glory, as being a kind of treason against God, and as an unjust attainment for himself, a poor, dependant, ignorant sinner. The Christian, made wise to salvation, dreads to be left to his own wisdom; because he knows, that blindness is its other and its truer name.

Christ is made, of God, wisdom to the believer. He spake as never man spake; and none teacheth like him. He often gives a poor and ignorant countryman such instructions, as render him abundantly more wise than the mere scholar, by all the florid pomp of the schools. So engrafted too are his instructions, that the art of man, and the sophistry of Satan, cannot baffle those who possess them. His knowledge is solid, and real, and enjoyable; such as the heart can feel, the soul live by, the spirit exult in, the whole man act upon, amidst a thousand trials in the world, and in the nearest prospect of death and eternity.

Possessing this wisdom, how serenely can the Christian look down upon the bustling cares and pursuits of men, upon their honors, their pleasures, their riches; even as a man of great natural wisdom would look down upon the follies and recreations of boys? Toys and games employ the attention of children, and engage their passions, though frivolous and fleeting: And are the solicitudes of men, and of old men too, less idle or extravagant, when they lay out all their time, and strength, and souls, for that which profiteth not even here, and which none pretend to be profitable in the day of wrath? What poor things are these of

the world in the hours of sickness and pain? And how much poorer still in the hour of approaching death? Honors, titles, and estates, cannot remove a pang, nor give one drop of consolation; but, in many cases, afford a wish of dismal remorse to their owners, that they had never obtained them. There is, I fear, more than one *Dives* in eternity, who laments that he had not been a hundred times poorer and sorer than any *Lazarus* (with grace) was or could be in this world.

True wisdom proves its own worth by obtaining a proper and valuable end. On the other hand, that cannot be real, but delusive wisdom, which is always working and promising, and at last concludes in nothing, or nothing but ruin. But this is the most, which is attained by the wisdom of this world, spiritually viewed: It gains air and dirt, a name and a perishing good (if a good) below; and then it ceases to act, leaving its poor possessor only misery and disappointment, except a fearful expectation of an unwished and an unwelcome hereafter. Can the end of the merest idiot be more stupid and unwise?

Without a doubt, the affairs of this life must be carried on, and the Christian must more or less be engaged in them; but the wisdom of grace in his soul will teach him, that there are also other affairs to mind; affairs of infinitely more moment to him, than all the world put together. If he should gain the utmost or the whole of this earth, and lose himself and the end of his being, where would be his profit and advantage? People, who can speculate clearly and nicely for gains in common matters, would do well to carry their thoughts of profit and loss a little farther towards the end of time, when all things are to be balanced and settled for ever.

Lord, above all wisdom of earth, and earthly gain, may I obtain that wisdom, which leadeth to an happy immortality, and which shall abide with me beyond the

bounds of time! I am a poor dying creature, going fast out of this world, and almost upon the very threshold of another. O help me to see then, what can truly profit, or what may really hinder me; that the loins of my mind may be girt up with the girdle of saving wisdom, and that I may always be so running, as at length to obtain the crown! O preserve my heart from that unwise wisdom, which layeth up what must soon be lost, and squanders away what can never be regained! which thinketh much of airy trifles, and almost not at all, or not at all to any purpose, of an unperishing good!—Of a good which thy Spirit hath called, "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, a crown of glory that fadeth not away, a building of God eternal in the heavens, a kingdom which cannot be shaken, (a blessedness) which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor entered into the heart of man, yea, rivers of joy and pleasure for evermore!"—Lord, if thou give but the wisdom to obtain these; I shall very soon cease to lament the want of all wisdom beside!

CHAPTER XII.

UPON INDEPENDENCE.

MEN desire what is called independent fortunes, through their natural arrogance, and fond indulgence to their flesh: And because believers are flesh as well as spirit, therefore, in proportion as that flesh is spiritually uncircumcised and unsubdued, even do these require this meat of the world for their lust. It is very irksome to a believer's carnal nature, that he lives in his spirit the life of faith; and it will be more and more irksome to nature, as this life grows in him and is pro-

ved by trials, which tend to deny or abridge his earthly desires. The flesh cannot delight in any thing, that doth not gratify its senses; but the life of the spirit consists greatly in *crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts*, in trusting God through a naked promise for what is yet unseen, and in giving up will, hope, desire, and every thing within and without, to his disposal. This is all horrid and dismal, yea, death itself, to the natural man. He hates, and abhors, and scoffs, and sets all his wits and passions at work to cry down a life so strange and peculiar, that he must even die to himself and all he loves, before he can live it. But whosoever will save this life of the carnal mind, shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose it, by the mercy of God, shall find a better, even a life of confidence and communion with Christ Jesus.

This principle of independence, or aversion to live in simple trust upon God, is the secret cause why many professors hasten to be rich, or will be rich in this world, though by it they fall into a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men into ruin and perdition. If I can get such and such a fortune, I will do so and so (say they) and then serve God without distraction. But the flesh is not to be laid asleep by indulgence, nor the fire to be put out by heaping up fuel. Experience shows, that large possessions do much oftener damp any little life or zeal for God, than quicken the Christian's hope and concern for a better world.

The spirit of faith teaches another lesson. It bids a man *commit all his way to the Lord*, and rather to fear than to court great riches; knowing what mischiefs and wretchedness they have brought upon many, who once seemed to run well; and knowing also the natural desire of the carnal mind to covet these things merely for its own food and feasting.

The goodness of God, therefore, providentially keeps

his children, for the most part, poor in this world, that they might live in the fuller trust and dependence upon himself. He that doth not expect much from this world, cannot be much disappointed by it. When a man hath little or nothing before him, he looks to the best help: So the poor Christian sees, that God is his best help, and therefore lives humbly upon his bounty. In this way of continual trust and daily dependence, and not by fulness of bread or independence, he is made rich in faith by additional experiences, and walks with more and more strength and sweetness of spirit as an heir of the kingdom.

On the other hand, how many rich professors are there, who plead their very situations in life, as so many false reasons, why they should be gay and splendid, why they should see all sorts of fine company, no matter of whom, why they should have pompous equipage and luxurious tables, and why, in short, they should have every thing in dress, manner, and custom, which their poor, vain, foolish, unmortified flesh can desire to have? They seem not to see, how in all this they are living to themselves or to earth, and not to God or his glory among men. How it is, that they support faith at any rate, with every indulgence and ease to the flesh, with full conformity to the world, and with the entire good opinion of the world, I know not; but this I know, that, if the true life be supported amidst so much contagion and disease, it is because all things are possible with God, though with men, this among others, is impossible. I speak not against rank and station, for these are providential appointments and necessary in themselves; but against the abuse of these to pride, sloth, vanity, and all the common evils and excesses of a polluted world. And I believe also, that I do not speak from envy or chagrin; for I really know not the man in this world, with whom I should wish or dare to wish an exchange of situation.

Lord, let me have what is best for my true life and welfare, and that only. Make me contented in thy allotment. I have often been otherwise, and am still prone to desire unnecessary and dangerous things: O forgive me this error and blindness, and correct the madness of my proud and rebellious heart by the fervent faithful life of thy Holy Spirit. So shall I desire only what will please thee, and be content in my soul with what thou givest, or when thou deniest, however my flesh may strive to murmur and repine. O hear me; and let my whole trust, my God, be in thee!

CHAPTER XIII.

ON WORLDLY GRANDEUR.

To a Christian, living and walking as becomes his heavenly calling, how poor and creeping, how idle and vain, how foolish and wretched, is the common eager pursuit after high distinctions in the world! They not only come up, and are cut down, like the grass, withering into dust and oblivion; but, while they appear, they are empty and fleeting shadows, or (if it can be conceived) the very "shadow of a shade." If viewed at a distance, they seem solid as a mountain; if embraced closely, they are found but a cloud. Their possessors are poor, because ever in want; one blast of honor will not serve him, that wishes for two; nor a thousand, him that can hope for more. The dominion of Europe would make a natural man pant for Asia; and he that cannot be satisfied without an additional province or river, would not be satisfied with this whole world if he had it, but, like Alexander, would grasp and lament for another. Whatever a

natural man hath, it is no matter; he never hath enough; he always wants more. Consequently he is poor; and he is wretched, because he perpetually feels himself poor. He hath both miseries from his poverty, and torments from his pride.

The real Christian is enabled to pity the anxious absurdity and vexatious vanity of those things, which are the great jet and concern of the worldly great and worldly wise. He looketh indeed for a name, but it is for an everlasting name, which cannot be cut off. He is not content to be happy only for a few days or years, but desires to be blessed and joyful for thousands and millions of ages to come. He longs for a crown, but it is for a crown of glory that fadeth not away. He pants for a kingdom, but it is for the kingdom of Christ and of God. He is really a person of boundless ambition; for nothing less will serve him than the infinite realms of everlasting glory. Riches are much upon his heart; but they are the durable, the unsearchable riches of Christ. He cannot be put off with the paltry cares and thorny honors of worldly greatness; but nobly pursues, and with certainty too, the very happiness and grandeur of God himself, even that very glory which Christ received from the Father, and which, as their Head, he will share with his members.

Compared with this, all the pride and glory of man appear but as stubble or falsehood, the mere dream of a shadow, a nothing. And if human greatness can appear thus in the believer's ideas now; what will it seem, when the earth itself shall be dissolved, and the Babylon of sin upon it shall be thrown down into perpetual ruins?

CHAPTER XIV.

ON WORLDLY COMPANY.

ALL things may be lawful, but all are not expedient. It may be lawful for a Christian to be much among the men of this world, and in some cases it may be necessary, for the discharge of lawful callings; but it is not expedient certainly to be more among them, than is thus strictly proper and necessary. Either the Christian must enter into their spirit, or they into his, before they can be agreeable companions. If he takes up their spirit, surely it will be to his grief, and his burden. And it is very unlikely that they should come into his; unless God might bless his faithful discourses to the good of their souls. But this is seldom the case in worldly company, and especially in the company of many worldly men together. The corruptions of one will bear up and harden the corruptions of another; and he, that perhaps would not have jeered alone, will scoff by sympathy with a mocking crowd. It is best to speak of spiritual things with carnal men by themselves; when common decency may force them to give a patient hearing, even though grace may not crown the discourse with a blessing. An whole herd may trample upon your jewels, and then turn again to rend you.

That man's religion is much to be doubted of, who frequents the society of the men of this world for satisfaction and pleasure. "How can two (even two only) walk together, unless they be agreed?" "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world; but I have chosen you (says Christ) out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

Can a man touch filth, and not be defiled; or fire,

and not be hurt? How much less then can a man conform to the spirit of this world, without pollution to his soul, or without feeling the loss of that peace, if he ever had it, which the world can neither give nor take away? It is no wonder that men complain of spiritual falls and desertations, when they stand upon slippery places, and leave the presence of God for the presence of mammon. How can a heart, reeking from the hot dung hill of this filthy world, be offered as a sweet smelling savor to God, or hope to be accepted with returns of his heavenly fire?

CHAPTER XV.

THE MANNERS OF THE WORLD ARE HURTFUL AND HINDERING TO BELIEVERS.

THE apostle declared it, as his privilege, that "the world was crucified to him, and he to the world." Another apostle says, that "whosoever will be a friend to the world, is the enemy of God." And Christ assures us, that "we cannot serve God and mammon," insomuch that if we would approve ourselves to be his disciples, we must take up our cross daily and follow him.

This is very evident; they who are the most given to the modes of this world, and mix most with its customs and pursuits, are the least alive to God, and the least lively in the things of God. Gaiety and foppery of dress, mimicry of worldly pride and parade, the hollow language of fashionable companies and friendship, do ill become a Christian, and never promote his true welfare. It is not indeed the custom at this day

to say such things to professors; but they are not, however, the less true, or the less needful.

Poor and wretched are all these fooleries, when weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and especially when they thrust out the enjoyment of things divine. To have gay bodily apparel with cold and naked souls; to possess fulness of bread with emptiness of grace; to enjoy much worldly company, and lose the society of God and his saints; to be esteemed polite and genteel in manners with men, and to be awkward and dumb in addresses to God; is all such a complication of folly, meanness, misery, and sin, as a Christian in his right mind should be amazed at and abhor.

Are we loved by the world? It is for this reason, the world will love its own. But how then are we chosen out of the world? How then can we belong to Christ, whom the world hateth? This trimming between God and the world is neither for the comfort of our souls, nor for the credit of our profession.

Do we fear to be censured for singularity and precision? A Christian must be singular; for he is one of those, who is not to be numbered with the nations, a stranger, and a pilgrim, or passenger here; and he must be precise, neither loving the world nor living for the world, for otherwise the love of the Father is not in him.

On the other hand, an open and generous civility, a gentle and benevolent deportment, bespeaking sincerity of heart and holiness of life, are truly ornamental to the Christian. In avoiding the ape, a believer needs not to stumble upon the bear; nor, in shunning grimace and affectation, to plunge into sourness and brutality. If meekness, patience, gentleness, good will, and good works, will please all men; it is his duty, by these means, to study to please them. But if they expect his conformity to the world for their pleasure, and are

disgusted at the transformation and renewal of his mind, as it is more than probable they will be; it is then his honor and his privilege not in this way to please them, if he would approve himself to be the servant of Christ.

Though the Christian, in one sense, must be in the world and put his best hand to its business and affairs, according to his lot from God's providence; yet, in another sense, he must come out from the world, and be separate, lest his soul be hindered and defiled. He cannot enter into the spirit of the world without injury and loss: And it is the spirit, not the lawful business of the world, which contains all the evil. In his calling and concerns, a believer is to glorify God; And he is enabled to do this, first by the prayer of faith over them, and then by the life of faith in them. That business and those intentions, which will not admit of these, are to be avoided as the very plague.

Lord, how poor and vile are all the gay modes of this world, compared with the simplicity and enjoyment of thy truth! how beggarly and unsatisfying are its vanities, how low and crawling its ambition, how foolish and cheating its hopes, how vain and unprofitable its cares, how various and continual its troubles, how wretched and horrible its end! O give me thy wisdom and love, thy grace and thy truth; for this is that better part, which shall never be taken from me!

CHAPTER XVI.

ON CONVERSATION AMONG PROFESSORS.

THERE are many professors of religion, who are always craving for company. They think, that to be alone, is to be dull, and that, without conversing with

creatures, they must be silent and stupid, whimsical or melancholy. Such persons are to be pitied, who have not learned the divine secret of talking with God in private by fervent faith and prayer, who know not how to listen to the still small voice of his spirit in his holy word, who cannot find an endless delight in discovering and tasting the sweets of redemption, and who loathe to commune with their own hearts, in their closet or their chamber, and be still.

When such persons get into company, and especially into great company, they soon discover how unfit, as christian professors, they are to be in it. The discourse, if of God and his truths, will be light and unsavory, without unction or solid experience; or if their converse turn, as it generally will, upon men and earthly things, it will only differ from the language and spirit of this world, by being spoken by persons who wish to be thought of as living for another.

It is a melancholy truth, that the levity, dissipation, envy, calumny, and detraction, too often found among companies and parties, professedly religious, as well as among the people of the world, make retirement very necessary to the Christian who would walk much with God, and far more cheerful than the generality of talkative professors can conceive it to be. But the soul, which is led to the true enjoyment of divine communion, finds it a relief, rather than a burden, to cease from man.

The Christian should not, if possible, get into company, but either to impart some spiritual good, or to receive it. If he hath grace and talents for the former, he will, before discourse, secretly look up to God for aid and blessing, and afterwards will desire, rather to be humbled for what he could not say, or for the manner of saying it, than to be pleased on his own account, for any thing he did say, or for the satisfaction afforded to others. If, on the other hand, he hath received edi-

fication from godly conversation, he will then pray, that it may abide with him, that the sweet savor may not be lost, that it may be carried into lively act and experience, and that, like good seed upon good ground, it may increase with the increase of God, and bring forth fruit abundantly to perfection.

All this implies, that large and mingled assemblies must be more noisy than profitable. There hath been of this at all times very sufficient evidence. Great entertainments and many persons called together to enjoy them, may serve to keep out the calm serenity and sweet possession of divine reflections, but perhaps too rarely promote them. In many words, there will probably be errors and folly; nor do numbers in a company always multiply wisdom. The flesh may be gratified and feasted, while the spirit may be starved, and weared, and dry, and at last sent empty away.

It is the way of God to "feed his people with the rod [of his gracious and selecting power] even his flock, his heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel [the field of the world:] And they do feed [like Abraham and the patriarchs, who were strangers and pilgrims upon earth] in Bashan and Gilead [the lands appointed for them] as in the days of old." Micah vii. 14. They were ever "a people dwelling alone [in abstraction from the spirit of this world] and not reckoned among the nations." Numb. xxiii. 9.

If I have thee, O my God, I have plenitude of society, though (like the blessed John at Patmos) no creature should be nigh, or though I should be an outcast from all the world. Thou canst talk with me by thy works, by thy providences, and chiefly by thy Spirit and word. O what delight have I felt in the testimonies of thy faithfulness and truth, of thy mercy and grace, of thy presence and love, of thy glory and power! Surely, surely, when I have enjoyed these in

ıeir genuine sweetness, retired from every eye but ıine, it hath seemed hard to go forth again into the 'orld, or even into the converse of those, whom thy wn providence and grace have endeared to me. And this be so divinely delightful, in a mortal body and miserable world, O what shall my felicity be, when become a pure exalted spirit with pure life, in the alm and unspotted regions of glory!—When I think f these unutterable mercies, how can I but long and ıant, how can I but hunger and thirst for God, the iving God, my God, my own God, and my own for ver!

CHAPTER XVII.

ON THE CHANGES OF TIME.

How do the things of this world pass away! One ɔeneration followeth another, and another that, and so ɔn from age to age, filling up the long rolls of time in ıelancholy array. They appear long to me, because ny rule of comparison is taken from the shortness of ıuman life; but to eternity, to the everlasting existence ınd infinitude of my God, these ages are almost a no-hing. Into this eternity all that can be called time is ɔontinually passing, as into a gulf which hath neither ɔottom nor bound. Thus time is full of changes and ɔicissitudes; while eternity is not only a perpetual *now*, ɔut also a perpetual *same*.

When I look back into the histories of ancient days, ınd review the confusions and violences that have ɔassed (for the history of the world is little more than ı record of its sins;) I ask my heart, to what purpose have all these things been, and where is now the profit

to those evil men, who promoted them? Their works are in the dust, or at best upon paper; so that, excepting perhaps for punishment, they have neither remained here, nor followed their authors. All their hopes, and cares, and commotions; their own restlessness, and their inquietudes to others; are buried all in everlasting gloom. The pleasant remembrance of their gayest hours is either extinguished, or swallowed up in sorrow for their sins; and the prospect before them——O what can this be, but a complication of all that is dreadful, unavoidable, and eternal!

This cool and serious review of all worldly things and affairs passes so often upon my mind, and seems so necessary in reminding me, how much I am but a stranger and sojourner here, that, if I have dwelt a little the more upon the vain wickedness of this world, the reader will know the reason in me, if he feel no occasion to apply it to himself.

One cannot take up an annual calendar of names, published only twenty or thirty years ago, without almost considering oneself among the tombs. The gay courtier and the plotting statesman, who once figured away within the senate or about the throne, now lay in undistinguishable ruin with the beggar and the clown; not less vile than these, and perhaps not less regarded and forgotten than the lowest of the low.

And what shall preserve, from the like disaster, all the present system of cares and pleasures? If, indeed, that can be called a system, which begins in evil, is carried on with disorder, and ends in folly or nothing.

O but (says one) "I have much goods laid up for many years; and I will say to my soul, soul, take thine ease, eat drink, and be merry." One of this sort, not worthy to be named, is put down in God's record for an everlasting fool. In the same night his soul was required of him, and had something else to think of than to attend the absurd business, which only the body

could do, of eating, drinking, and being merry, in the abuse of temporal good.

In the midst of all this perishing and disordered state, there is one rich blessing, which never can fail. The mercy of Jehovah in Christ Jesus endureth, yea endureth for ever. This is often repeated by the Lord himself, that it might be constantly and cheerfully believed.

O my soul, thy time faileth, thy body is decaying, the world is daily changing, and nothing about thee continueth in one stay. Blessed be God, to thee likewise a change shall soon come, and come for the better in the midst of it all! Whatever alterations appear, thou hast an unalterable God, and an unalterable home before thee. If the earth fall into destruction, as soon it will, thy estate cannot be lost; for thou art only a pilgrim and traveller here, and thy inheritance is above, out of the reach of ruin. Thy interest being safe in Christ, all is safe, that is worth saving, with respect to thee. Thou canst only pass from death into life, from sin to holiness, from pain to peace, from earth to heaven, from mortals to God.

O how then should I rejoice in thee, my Savior and my Lord! In thee, who makest all things mine; all, either as good, or to lead me to good. I adore thee, that thou thus disposeth the world, life, death, things present, or things to come, in my behalf; calling them mine, making them really mine, because they contribute to my welfare. Above all, I bless thee for the end. I am lost in love and admiration, when thou tellest me, that I am thine, O my Redeemer; as thou art God's!

What manner of love is this; that I a mutable worm, should become an immutable spirit; that I who live in a tottering house of clay amidst a people of unclean lips, should be raised to a mansion of glory among the innumerable company of saints and angels; that I, a dull inhabitant of a miserable world, ruined and ravaged by sin and time, should be translated to a joyful rest,

unchanging as eternity; that I who was once a slave to satan and deserve only to live with him, should be made and kept a child of God, yea, an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ Jesus, of a kingdom which cannot be shaken! O what manner of love is this indeed!

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON THE PATIENT ENDURING OF WRONGS.

LIKE the blessed Psalmist, I have sometimes been rewarded evil for good, to the great discomfort of my soul. It seems trying to flesh and blood; that is, to my animal and corrupt passions, to bear all and to say nothing: But yet this is generally my wisdom and my duty.

It is my wisdom, because then I do not stir up farther evil or strife in my own bosom, or in others; and I moreover engage my gracious Master to undertake for me, by committing all in silent patience to him, who hath engaged to make every thing, and such things as these most certainly among the rest, work together for my good. Thus that, which appears to be only a natural evil, will, by his superior management and control, be turned into a spiritual blessing.

It is also my duty to endure, considering him who bare the most severe contradiction of sinners against himself; because thereby I prove that I belong to him; for which purpose, perhaps, trials of this kind may have been permitted to fall upon me. If I have right and truth on my side, it is not only faithless but also unreasonable to be impatient. I ought rather to be thankful in that behalf, and to ask mercy and grace for those, who slander me against all equity and without a cause.

It is indeed unpleasant to have the treatment, which he experienced who said, "I became a reproach among all my neighbors; and they of mine acquaintance were afraid of me, and they that did see me without conveyed themselves from me." But this may be God's physic to my soul, which is not given me for my pleasure, but as the painful means of future good. My worldly attachments, or my christian attachments in a worldly way, may be growing stronger than are for the true health of my soul; and, therefore, this is a call to live more inwardly upon grace, and to wait in faith and prayer for more communion with God. When I gain his company by losing the company or the friendship of men, and even of good men with great corruptions like my own; I have no reason to lament any loss, but to be thankful, with all humility, for the kindness of every providence, which leads me nearer and keeps me closer to my blessed Lord. He is a tried and sure friend indeed, a friend for eternity.

If I took another sort of conduct, and exposed those as I might, and perhaps as they justly may deserve, who have done me evil for good; I should indulge only that base revenge of my fallen nature, which would plunge me as deep another way in the corruption, of which I may have right to complain. While I am only wronged, I am safe; but I am open to all manner of evil, when guilty of wrong.

Above all the harm that can be done me by creatures, let me tremble at my own passions, which, like tinder, are ready to kindle by the smallest spark of mental fire. May I tremble too at the officious readiness of others to increase my inflammation by their own. And alas! how much more ready is corrupt nature to feel and to foment discord, than to subdue and abhor it! Let me pray then to be delivered from the strife of other men's tongues; and to have a strong restraint, for such I greatly need, upon mine. Sin "is

the great kill-friend," as one calls it; may I therefore beg to be guarded against sin, both in myself and in them!

O Lord, what a nature, and what a world, do I live in! I groan under a nature, which is ready to meet all the evils and confusions that are in the world, and to make every one of them my own. How doth the unquiet spirit of man plunge himself and all about him, into confusions, miseries, and distresses; engendering unhappy discords among individuals, and bloody cruel wars among the nations! And how often, my blessed Master, instead of retiring to thy bosom, have I myself allowed this spirit of violence within me, and met it in other men! How much have I wronged my enemies by not praying for them, as I ought, when they have vented their wrongs against me! With how little patience and submission to thy will have I endured these wrongs; not considering that they could not have come, unless they had been permitted by thee, and were allowed to come altogether for my good! O Lord, wipe off my guilt by thy most precious blood, and enable me in future, as well not to take offence, as to be earnest to give none. So shall I appear indeed to be the disciple of thee, my Savior, who like a patient speechless lamb, didst endure all manner of insults and injuries, and so, in following thee, I shall find peace at least by thy grace both in thy bosom and in my own, though I find none beside throughout this distracted world!

CHAPTER XIX.

ON PRAYER.

PRAYER is the very breath of faith, and the first evidence of life in the new man. The Lord said of Paul, *Behold he prayeth;* because the Lord had then given him a heart to pray. Doubtless, he had often fasted and prayed before, as far as the lips were concerned: but the spirit, not words; life, not expression only, constitute prayer with God. Language may give it a form; but language alone is like mere body without a soul; and he that so offers it, renders to God a dead unclean carcass for a living sacrifice, which is an abomination in his sight.

Whatever hath life, must breathe; and if the life be sound and strong, it will breathe freely. Short irregular, disordered breath, discovers either great exercise or ill health. It is the same in the life of faith. If the soul be quickened by Christ, it will breathe out its desires after him; perhaps, like a child at first, mingled with strong crying, bitter sobs, and many tears; but still it breathes on, and prays on; its breath of prayer is not stopped, but struggles for life and increase. If the prayer be faint and weak, disordered and low, the person is not in full life and health, or else some great temptation oppresses him heavily. The Physician of souls must be looked to for medicine, and the Redeemer of souls for deliverance. Certainly all is not right; and a speedy help should be sought for and applied.

When the mind is touched by grace, it will and must pray. If the heart cannot find words to carry up its requests, it will send them forth in earnest groans. Prayer can no more be kept from ascending, than flame from the fire. "The Spirit (said one who

understood this matter well) helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." The cries of a drowning man are above the formality of words, and aim to pierce the ear for help. So the deep-felt anguish of a convinced heart is inexpressibly eager for mercy, and with moans and groans sues it out from God in right earnest. It doth not seek a florid oration, but pours out aspirations, at times, too ardent and mighty for words. O how God loveth such addresses as these! One Abba Father; one tearful sigh; one inward groan; are beyond, and better than all the fine speeches in the world.

Let not the broken hearted sinner grieve then too much, that he cannot find language to express the fulness of his desires. His desires are the better for being found in his bosom too large and strong for utterance. There is more of heaven in them, and they will break out at last the swifter towards heaven. If he can find fit words, let him use them; if he cannot, let not their absence increase his concern. God knows and loves the language of the heart, and in due time will answer the prayer.

As to the gift of wordy prayer, it is generally bestowed for the sake of others. If accompanied with faith, it is highly valuable for godly edifying: if not, it will rather weary than improve. This gift is stirred up to more usefulness by exercise; and when expressions flow easily, the heart can freely open itself without over much labor or fear.

As to public ministrations of prayer, the unhappy zeal of party renders it difficult to speak of them without danger of offence. However, this every candid Christian may venture to allow, that a form of sound words may more decently be used for congregations, than the loose, crude, and incoherent expressions of

raw and unexperienced men. On the other hand, could the church be always sure of sound and able ministers, who might rightly pray over the word of truth, as well as divide it; there certainly would be less occasion for forms, which seem to have been composed to prevent disorders, or keep out heresies, or to show to the church at large, what should be the objects of prayer at all times. No one surely can deny, that, in both the Jewish and Christian church, where public forms have been used, men have prayed together with the Spirit, and perhaps with the more understanding and communion, because they knew the words, and that it is possible to do so now with any sound and gracious form. So, on the other hand, it would be bigotted and unchristianlike to affirm, that the Spirit of grace hath not blessed what is called free prayer to the edification of souls; when, doubtless, there are now living numberless witnesses, of great truth and piety, to the contrary. It never was the form or the want of it, that made true prayer; but the grace of God in Christ Jesus, flowing through the words, that were used, to the heart. And if all these gracious persons divesting themselves of narrow prejudices, were asked, how, and by what means they prayed? They would probably answer to a man, that it was by faith in Christ Jesus, and by the good Spirit of their God. If both sides, then, are thus in debt to grace for the very life and being of all their prayers, and are thus alike free to confess it; how then should the meekness and forbearance of their dear Lord glow in all their hearts towards each other, and cause them to love one another gladly, because he hath made no difference in his love to them? Surely, this would be much better than to wrangle about a mode or no mode of prayer, in either of which, just as God blesses, there may be much true prayer or no prayer at all. It is

the spirit of faith which carries on the real business; not the form or the gesture, the lip or the tongue.

Having ventured thus far to walk upon ground, which party and prejudice have made very tender; it may be expedient for my soul to consider the subject of prayer in a view more interesting and necessary to its welfare.

My Savior commands me to watch, as well as to pray; and his apostle exhorts me to "be sober and watch unto prayer." My flesh is prone to be intoxicated with the mystic cup of Babylon, with the love of this present evil world, and therefore is unruly and unsteady. From hence arise all my dulness and distractions of mind in the things of God; my coldness and weariness in prayer, my feebleness in duties, and my faintness in praise. I had need to be sober, for I have a great concern before me: I ought to watch, for my enemies are subtle and mighty. They watch, if I do not, and are always ready to take advantages to hinder, whenever I am careless to get forward. I have an open door, and many adversaries. If I do not watch unto prayer, the world will get between me and my duty; if I do not watch in prayer, satan will do his utmost to prevent my sweet or continued approach unto God: if I do not watch after prayer, pride, presumption, security, or negligence, will find a way into my heart. O Lord, if I were fully and constantly aware of my true situation, how could I think to do less than always to pray and not to faint!

My vile heart is ever ready to take up with the mere performance of duty. How often have I prayed for spiritual mercies; and not considered afterwards whether God hath granted them, or not? For increase of faith, wisdom, holiness, and other graces, I have asked with earnestness at the time, and then soon have forgotten what I asked for, or neglected to mark the event. Hence all the lowness of my attainments in

divine things, and my overborne subjection to things earthly. And when I have requested temporal blessings; how little have I considered the hand of God in granting, or the wisdom of God in refusing them! How often have I sought the good for its own sake, instead of seeking it for God's glory and my spiritual welfare, and thereby was ready to turn it, if granted, into an evil! How little use have I made of temporal benefits, when they have been given me, and sometimes given, unexpectedly too, that I might notice God's providence; and how ready hath my corrupt nature been to take and apply them all to itself! Surely, I am as much the monument of God's patience, as of his love.

It is a matter always to be had in remembrance, that prayer should be followed up with thanksgiving. I ought to be thankful, if what I have prayed for is received; and I should be thankful also, if what I have prayed for is restrained. God is better to me than I am to myself; and he only restrains any thing from his children, either because it is not good for them at all, or not good in the time and purpose, for which they desired it.

The practice of many saints under the Old Testament was to pray thrice in a day. According to opportunity, I cannot pray too often, either in the closet, the family, or the church. There are indeed stated times for these; but one kind of prayers may be used at all times, and in every circumstance of life. The prayers of ejaculation, or of darting up the heart towards God, in short and pathetic sentences, have a wonderful effect in them, and tend very much to keep up the soul's communion with God, and the life of holiness in all things. Many such may be taken from the Psalms in particular. O how sweetly will they often pass towards heaven from the soul! How warmly stir up the affections, and raise the mind! How strongly check the inordinate care of earthly things!

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer!"

CHAPTER XX.

ON SINGING PRAISES TO GOD.

THE first of all earthly singers gave this as an inspired rule: "Sing ye praises with understanding." Without spiritual understanding, we can only make a noise. Unless we know how deeply we are indebted to God, and have the sweet sense of his goodness in our souls; we may please ourselves with a tune, but we yield no music to him. Some of old chanted to the sound of the viol, and invented to themselves instruments of music; but, at the same time, they were among those, who were at ease in Zion, and who put far away the evil day, to whom wo was denounced. God never instituted music in his service, however, like other carnal ordinances, he might bear with it under the Jewish economy; but only trumpets and rams' horns, to usher in the seasons and solemnities. It is spiritual harmony which is the delight of heaven, and not outward jingle and sound; and therefore if we are not spiritual, we can have no true notion of this delight, nor make melody in our hearts to the Lord. The thrills of music, and the divine joys of the soul, are very different things. Worldly men have had the first, and thought them from heaven; but they continued no longer than the sound: while the peace of gracious praise, is full, sublime, and abiding. We must indeed be real christians before any of us can say with the apostle, "I will pray with the *spirit*, and I will pray

with the understanding also; I will sing with the *spirit*, and I will sing with the understanding also."

I cannot but shake my head, when I hear an officer of the church calling upon the people, "to sing to the praise and glory of God;" and immediately half a dozen merry men, in a high place shall take up the matter, and most loudly chant it away to the praise and glory of themselves. The tune perhaps shall be too difficult for the most part of the congregation, who have no leasure to study crotchets and quavers; and so the most delightful of all public worship shall be wrested from them, and the praises of God taken out of their mouths. It is no matter whence this custom arose: In itself it is neither holy, decent, nor useful, and therefore ought to be banished entirely from the churches of God.

When Christians sing altogether in some easy tune, accommodated to the words of their praise, and not likely to take off their attention from sense to sound; then, experience shows, they sing most *lustily* (as the Psalmist expresses it) and with the best good *courage*. The symphony of voice and the sympathy of heart may flow through the whole congregation, which is the finest music to truly serious persons, and the most acceptable to God, of any in the world. To "sing with grace in their hearts to the Lord," is the melody of heaven itself; and often brings a foretaste of heaven to the redeemed even here. But jiugle, piping, sound and singing, without this divine accompaniment, are grating discordant harshness with God, and vapid wretched insipidity to the souls of his people.

I am no enemy to music as an human art; but let all things be in their place. The pleasures of the ear are not the gracious acts of God's Spirit in the soul; but the effect of vibrated matter upon an outward sense. This may be indulged as an innocent and ingenious amusement; but what have our amusements

to do with solemn and sacred adorations of God? Would not this be carnal, and after the modes of the world, and not after Christ? Surely, no believer will venture to call any thing spiritual, which doth not proceed from the Spirit of life, or tend to mortify the old man, with his affections and lusts.

Neither sounds of air, nor words of sense, alone, however excellent, can please God. "He is a Spirit; and they, who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth;" for such he seeketh.

Lord, help me, I beseech thee, thus to laud and adore thee! Give me a lively sense of thy mercy to my soul; and then my soul shall offer up her gracious returns of lively praise. Sacrifice and burnt-offering thou requirest not, for no outward thing, even of thine own appointment, when not inwardly understood, can please thee; the music of my voice, without the incense or breathings of my soul, thou wilt not accept: O assist me, then, to praise thee aright; for, without thee, I can do nothing. Thou alone givest occasion to praise; and thou also givest the Spirit of praise to use the occasion. Vouchsafe both unto me. Then shall I one day join the great assembly of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, and sing, with joy unspeakable and full of glory, that ever new song, "Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb! Amen. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever. Amen!"

CHAPTER XXI.

A CHRISTIAN, IN LOSING HIS LIFE, SAVES IT.

CHRIST hath said, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."

In doing this, the christian must die daily. He is crucified with Christ in the flesh, that he may live with Christ in the spirit. His mortal body is brought into subjection to the rule of grace; and grace mortifies that body, by crucifying its affections and lusts.

These words are easy and plain; but alas! how few do know them! To die to self is the most painful thing to flesh and blood, that can be. To be stripped of all pretended worth, to renounce a man's own righteousness as well as his sins, to give up in earnest his own will and way, to live in an empty frame of mind, simply upon Christ for strength, wisdom, grace, and salvation, to desire nothing but what may please him, to be contented with the trials he sends, because they are his, to have a heart carried above the world, not to fear man against God, to bear, to believe, to hope, to endure all things as the best, and to maintain a firm view of eternal glory; all this is losing a man's own carnal life, and saving the life of his soul in Jesus Christ. The christian, who hath this in him, may say with the apostle: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life, which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

At first sight, this kind of life appears gloomy and dreadful; but, when once truly tasted, it is sweet and

pleasant to the soul. It grows less difficult and painful, as the carnal life is more and more subdued. The life of the flesh can only indulge some poor, base, and vexatious gratifications in earthly and perishing things; but the renewed life of the spirit consists in righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost, which cannot be lost, and which never can cloy. The enjoyment of this renders the christian, in proportion to his enjoyment, a steady man, unshaken or unsubdued by the disorders and distresses of the world, and cleaving the faster to God when they come. A worldly man is often terrified to his wit's end, or to death, where a real christian can be calm and resigned. He hath learned the worth of all life in Christ; and he knows, that what is really worth his anxiety, can never be lost. In throwing all upon God, he loses the fears and terrors of his weak and corrupt flesh, and gains strength and liveliness in his soul. God gives him a tranquility of courage, which the bravest human heart cannot put on. Women of delicate tenderness, by this gracious gift, have met the very king of terrors, with a soberness of triumph unknown to mortal heroes.

These mortal heroes, indeed, may have ventured upon death, despising life and all its enjoyments; but were evidently concerned for their vain glory, and the useless perpetuity of a name. The peculiar distinction of the christian hero is, that he not only can meet death as a vanquished foe, but also can look down upon the *infamy* of the world with a noble scorn, valuing it and all reputation among worms, as trifling pageantry or idle pride. He can live and die in secret, which none of these ostentatious mortals can either endure or dare to do.

No man can live truly by his own power, but only by power from on high. The christian, therefore, is daily looking up to Jesus, his head of life, for the

maintenance and support of all his graces. If Christ withdraw his hand, he must fall; for, in himself, the strongest, the wisest, the holiest christian, is confusion and wickedness, weakness and nothing. He feels himself void of all good, and so flies to Jesus to obtain it. When he doth not enjoy his Savior, he cannot enjoy himself. But when he hath him, he hath more than all things, because he hath him who possesses them all.

They who are great, and love to be great, in outward things, have commonly but little of this life within them. When the soul hath no feast within, it gads abroad for delight, and will put up with mean and carnal trash, unsuitable to its proper nature, rather than have nothing. Outward pomp and carnal show, in religion, commonly proclaim an inward emptiness and want.

There is a carnal knowledge of spiritual things, which the apostle calls "a knowing Christ after the flesh," and which is very different from the divine knowledge of those things. The apostles appear to have been in the former state till the day of Pentecost, when they received power from on high. They indeed loved Christ, and sincerely followed him before; but their love and knowledge of the Savior had in it a large mixture of flesh and corruption. Hence, they were astonished to hear of his sufferings and death, and their own humiliation; when, it is plain enough, they expected great temporal advancement and honor for themselves, and a glorious temporal kingdom for him. Even after his resurrection, like the Jews at large, they thought of a kingdom to be restored unto Israel: But, when the true kingdom came into their hearts, we hear no more of these carnal expectations, but of joy and readiness to suffer persecution and death for their Lord, and to go somewhere else, instead of this world, to enjoy him.

So among us called christians, there is this carnal knowledge of Christ, consisting in outward profession and a natural understanding of the truths of the gospel, which is also mixed sometimes with degrees of grace and spiritual life. But persons, in this state, are much in outward things, are great outwardly, talk of religion outwardly, and of its great advancement in the world. They are strong in their animal passions, carry these into religious matters, make a great noise and bustle among men, are great rulers if possible, seek to carry all church affairs in their own way, and in short are never easy out of a bustle, and certainly never easy in it. When these people sink into themselves, by getting more true life in Christ, they are found to be more and more mild, humble, patient, gentle, not obtruding themselves into things which they have not seen, nor vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind. Then Christ is all in all to them; and they themselves nothing at all. Then it is that they lose their own lives, and find them with great interest and sweetness in Christ.

If the love and word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom, we shall desire to be much with Christ in our spirits, and to shut out all possible interruptions and hindrances in our communion with him.

CHAPTER XXII.

ON THE OPINION OF CARNAL MEN.

THE judgment, which natural men form of spiritual life, is altogether wild and extravagant, gross and injurious. "The things of God [himself] are foolishness unto them, neither can they know them, because they

are spiritually discerned." And can those think rightly of the people of God, who have not the faculties to think rightly of the things, which render them distinct from other men, and which are the very grounds and principles of God's conduct towards them? And ought a Christian to be moved exceedingly at the judgment of ignorance and error?

This world's opinion of all divine things is indeed very foolish and vain. It condemns what it hath not seen, and despises what it doth not know. It laughs at the wisdom of God, which it is too weak to apprehend, and sets up its own perishing folly in its stead. A few years shall lay it low; and the wisest of the worldly wise will be the first to condemn themselves for the madmen and the fools. Wisd. v. 4.

Be satisfied then, fellow Christian, with the just judgment of God. Thou canst not be more despised than thy Savior. He indeed deserved no scorn, but thou much more than thou canst have. If they called the master of the house Beelzebub; shall those, who are of the household, think to escape a hard name? No: let them bear it for his sake: It will never disgrace them in heaven.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ON THE ESTEEM OF GOOD MEN.

THOUGH a nice sense of honor, consistent with his profession, becomes a Christian; yet an over-nice care to get honor from any man is neither the duty nor practice of the Christian life.

But be not too anxious, my brother, for the good opinion even of the best of men, nor altogether judge

of thy state by so uncertain a rule. Concern of this kind seems to argue a too fond regard of thy carnal self, or of thy own state in the world. If they show disrespect, and if it arise from mistake; rejoice that thy true hidden life depends not on the opinion of mortals, but on the love and just judgment of an unerring Redeemer. The opinion of others can neither make nor unmake thee, as a Christian. But if their disesteem be founded in truth, fear not to dive to the bottom of thine own undeservings, and cease not to pray for grace to correct them. Be not offended with thy brethren, in either case; for this will lead to ruptures neither for their profit nor thine. The glory of God and of his truth is also concerned, which should fill thee with the greater forbearance and caution in all thy dealings with the household of faith. Pray for wisdom to examine thy cause faithfully, to know the worst that can be found of thyself, and to see into the truth or mistake of others. And if, in thine own conscience, the right be with thee; be thankful for the mercy, and cease not, because they need it, to pray for them who are in the wrong. Thy true charity should relieve, in this way, their spiritual necessity, and so rise, with that lawful triumph of a Christian, by an holy and inward superiority of meekness and of truth.

Beware of anger and offence. The wrath of man cannot work the righteousness of God. Be humbled by every disesteem, whether just or unjust, within thyself. This is gaining a step in the great inward and spiritual progress of self-renunciation; for which end these means, though unpleasant to proud nature, may have been mercifully and providentially ordained. Fear not to see the worst of thine own infirmities: Tremble rather, lest they should be hidden from thee. When thou art made truly low in thine own eyes, the slights and contempts even of good men, proceeding as they usually do, not from grace but common infirmities, will

not over much vex thee. It is the fondness of self, and the pride of our hearts which render all outward insult and injury distressing and painful. He that thinks little of himself, can bear to be thought little of by others: But he, that is lifted up within, is grieved, when he cannot find that tribute of respect, which his own foolish fondness hath ordained for himself.

The best remedy for spiritual disorder is spiritual prayer. Corruption inflicts or feels pain; and grace should subdue corruption. It is the true wisdom of a Christian to set his faith, and not the passions of his unholy nature, at work upon evil. Grace will teach him not to huff, or snort, or resent, or speak great swelling words of carnal indignation; but to bear and forbear, and pray, and wait, and entreat, according to the occasion. When the rough north wind of trial rages and raves, then the graces of the Christian should more abundantly flow. All this is difficult without a doubt; but will not a gracious success be afterwards a comfort to the believer, both as it affords a real proof of the true life of Christ within him, and an occasion of glorifying God before men? And if it answer these ends, how great is his reason to be thankful?

When gracious men see all this work upon thee, they will honor God in his own gifts; but, if they do not, it is in no man's power to alter thy condition with him. Be deeply thankful that thou hast found mercy; and show tenderness to those, who need it from thee.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WEAKNESS IS IMPATIENT.

It is not strength, but weakness, which complains. He that is strong, can well bear the infirmities of the weak: He that is weak, cannot bear at all, but is overwhelmed with his own. A father in Christ can put up with the frowardness and indiscretion of the babe in Christ; but the latter, having his mind but little exercised, is full of dislikes, and always wants his own will and way: Otherwise, he complains.

This weakness is commonly captious; fonder of finding errors than healing them, and more able to discover the grounds of difference than to take up the methods of unity. Sincere, yet quarrelsome; troubled, yet headstrong; young in the faith, yet presuming; fond of parties and persons, of modes and of forms of doctrine, with warm life and little experience; all this is the character of most young or weak professors. When they grow older in grace, they become wiser in the kingdom, more catholic, patient, forbearing, candid, and forgiving. They see a thousand mistakes and wilfulnesses in their own first profession; and these incline them, through an increase of wisdom and strength, to endure kindly the infirmities and frailties of others. They then love what is real, encourage what is weak, pardon what is childish, endure what is troublesome, correct what is evil, and pray, not rave, when they see but slow improvements.

CHAPTER XXV.

ON RETIREMENT.

WHATEVER is a man's first great business in life, that he will pursue most, and desire to study with the least interruption and disorder. A man of this world hath his heart in the world; but a Christian gets as much as possible into heavenly things, because his heart and his treasure are in heaven.

The God of wisdom himself hath said, that no man can serve him and mammon. We have but one heart, which we cannot divide; and if it were possible, an heart and an heart, or a heart divided, would be a hateful offering to the Most High.

There is no christian, but who feels and bewails how often his common affairs draw off his mind from his best affairs, and throw him into dulness and distraction. He feels and bewails this, because he is a christian, and because his best affections are somewhere else. His grief is not so much, that he must apply himself to social duties, which are indispensable to every one according to his place under Providence, but that he cannot carry more of the true spirit and unction of religion into them. Could they be more and more sanctified by the word of God and prayer, and could his mind be more delivered from the worldliness both of them and of those with whom he must have to do; they would grow into a kind of holy ordinances to him, and, instead of hindering his faith, would improve his joy. We forget to bring religion into our common course of life; and so that course is suffered to bring its own punishment and trouble upon us. A christian, living like a christian in his outward profession, is far more in the way of rendering glory to God, and of doing good to men, than a hermit, who doeth nothing

in his wilderness but seek himself, or a monk, who by the torture of his body thinks to work out his own righteousness, by which to merit heaven. The true retirement is retiring from the sinful customs and spirit of this world, and giving up the soul to God in all things.

Having said this, it is also right to say, that there should be hours of secret retirement to every christian, if possible; or at least as much time as possible, for prayer, meditation, and reading, upon the things of God. Where this time is through necessity short, as it often must be among the poor, who generally are God's own rich ones; still the retired believer, in the midst of any or of all his business, may now and then sweetly dart up his soul to God in fervent ejaculations, which will keep up the true frame of his mind, and draw down many comforts from above. These short and silent breathings will show a lover's heart, and prove that, whatever may employ his hands, his mind is truly engaged for heaven.

Where circumstance of life, and the capacity of persons, will admit of farther separation from the world; it will be right, because advantageous, to use it. The retirement, however, must be for God, and not for self; in the spirit of religion, and not of laziness; to be more quickened for heaven, and not to be more useless upon earth. Hence it will be seen, that all christians are neither called to, nor fit for, an entire seclusion from the world: Their habits, dispositions, calls, and occupations of life render it improper for them.

When a christian can fill up all his retirement with the things of God and for his glory, with no just demand upon him from secular affairs; it is certainly a most high and desirable privilege. Such an one may and ought to farther himself in knowledge, and to devote all he knows, through grace, to the glory of God and the edification of men. Leisure is abused, when

employed in tattle and dissipation, as it often is; and the abuser had much better be engaged in some active calling and employment.

To retire indeed unto God, is the most severe and solemn business in the world. It is a sort of middle state between heaven and earth, which no carnal mind can either understand or love. The froth and levity of the flesh must be subdued; else all the retirement will end in vanity. Humble and ardent prayer should begin the day, the study or the exercise of gracious things should carry it on, some intervals must be found for supplications and praise, strict watchfulness and trials must be continually made upon the heart, and growing meetness for death and heaven must appear in the life, and no rest be taken at night, but after humble prayer and surrender of all into the hands of God for time and eternity. A truly retired christian is more careful of his time than any other man, because he can spend it more preciously. He thinks it a sad loss to throw away hours, which might have been employed in the works or word of God.

When the truly retired christian is alone, he is (as one says) "never less alone;" for God is with him and in him of a truth. He not only goeth into his study or his closet, but he gets within himself, into the closet of his heart, and watches all the motions of nature and grace. Thus in time he becomes truly learned in that most difficult subject—his own self.

When we talk much with others, it is hardly possible, in a nature so fallen and corrupt as our's not to talk amiss. But when we commune with God, he speaketh so with us, as to give an increase of wisdom and grace, with much solid refreshment of mind. His word and will become plain and familiar to our souls; we enter into the spirit of his ways; and our spirits feel many undoubted proofs both of their own immortality and of the great blessedness of approaching glory. This

wherever it abounds, deadens the affection of a christian to the low and vain discourse of the world, renders him more happy in and fit for his retirement, and enlivens his hopes for God and heaven. What improvement, thus to live! What blessedness, thus to die!

Many retire, that they may see and hear more of the world, and be entertained with its novelties and news: But the believer would withdraw to dive more fully into himself, as into a subject deep and little known, and to be more acquainted with his Redeemer in all the wonders and manifestations of his grace. It is a day lost indeed, when he gets no news of heaven, or hath made no steps towards it.

If a man doth not thus retire, he only opens a wide door to all sorts of temptations to rush in upon him. So very few are fitted for or called to this kind of leisure (though by abuse only it becomes leisure) that God in his wisdom hath appointed so much corporal employment in the world, even for his own children. As the earth would be more an Aceldama, or field of blood, than it is, but for necessary labors, which call away, in some respect or other, almost all men; so the church itself would be more defiled, and individuals more unholy, than they are already, if manual or active duties did not take up the greatest part of their time.

I have known many professors, and some of an order too which should have engaged them entirely in things divine, who have wasted in frivolous discourses, mean pursuits, idle engagements, and other sad dissipations, large portions of that time, which should have been devoted to studious improvement, serious conversation, or active piety. Vessels thus ever running out; how and when can they be filled? And what have they for others, who lay up so little for themselves?

O Lord, help me to retire indeed, but yet chiefly for thee, and for greater communion with thee. When I

find thee not in my heart, it is hard and darkened: When thou art not in my closet, it is either full of confusion as a market, or it is desert as the wilderness. I can get nothing; and I soon feel that I am nothing but an empty, unprofitable, void. O cheer thy poor servant with thy presence, who would indeed be a stranger and a pilgrim upon earth; yea, if it be thy will, a stranger to every thing but thee; having my heart in thy home, and my soul in every respect under thy command. Lord, thus help me to withdraw from the world, only to draw nearer, both in spirit and in life, unto thyself, and to whatever relates to thy glory!

CHAPTER XXVI.

ON THE FEAR OF MAN.

He that unduly fears man, cannot truly fear God: And he, that lives much in the fear of God, will not regard much what man can do unto him. The want of faith is the root of all carnal fear, which becomes less and less, as faith gathers strength and increase in the soul. It is a sad hindrance in the ways of God, as well as torment, to live under the views, opinions, prejudices, and passions of worldly men.

"The fear of man bringeth a snare;" and a snare for all sorts of evils. Mild, gentle, feeling, and delicate tempers, are most exposed to this danger; and they should pray much to him, who strengtheneth the weak, for fortitude without rudeness, for resolution without roughness, and for stability without stubbornness, that so they may properly act and hold out in the time of trial.

When it is a principle graciously established in the

soul, that men can do nothing to us but what is for our good, and that they must do whatever is; it greatly abates that fickle feebleness of nature, which, out of too much love and care for itself, brings us into bondage of heart to wretched worms, whose breath is in their nostrils, and themselves, in this way, not to be accounted of.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ON MY OWN IMPERFECTIONS.

WHILE I am in the flesh, I must be encompassed with many infirmities; and while I am in the world, I cannot escape trial and temptation. These things are grievous to my spirit; but I see, that they are permitted, to wean me from myself, and to draw off my heart from the creatures to my only true refuge in God.

What feebleness, at times do I not feel in duty; what fickleness and unsteadiness, in following my Redeemer; what dulness and distraction in prayer; so that I can hardly remain firm and lively long together in the pursuit of that good, which my soul most desires and approves. It is a war indeed in my members to get my corrupted nature down, and to have the life of grace warm and vigorous within me. I cannot but groan at times, in this tabernacle, being burdened, and almost oppressed, by the evils within and about me.

Were it not for divine help, O what should I do! Like Peter on the sea, I have sometimes ventured boldly after my Lord; but, like him too, through faintness of heart and weakness of faith, at other times, I have cried out, *Lord save, or I perish!* Thou hast helped me indeed, blessed be thy name, O my God;

but yet I cannot but reproach myself for the cold forgetfulness and weakness of my spirit, in doubting so often of thy faithfulness, and in not keeping hold of thy promises.

Thus Lord, I feel myself a poor, a frail, and altogether a weak and worthless man; fit for nothing but thy mercy, and capable of nothing, when left to my nature, but rebellion against it. When I survey myself, and all my confused and ruined faculties, I am filled with shame, and cannot but wonder at thy long suffering towards me. O wretch that I am, in what a vile body of sin do I live! How am I always struggling against thee with my perverse and wicked flesh, contrary to the true and lasting interests of my soul? How ready to yield to thine enemy and mine; or to give up all for lost, rather than maintain the hard and painful struggle with corruption and sin?

When I have been lively and zealous for my God; how often have I been ready to overlook, to misapply, or to turn his grace to the foolish vanity of my own mind? Insomuch, at times I seem all flesh to myself, and to have neither true light, life, wisdom, or strength from above, within me. My failures are and have been so numerous, the apostacy of my heart so great, the conduct of my life and temper so mutable and irregular, and all my frame so poor and wavering, so cold and weak in embracing the best things; that I am ready to bemoan with the prophet, "Wo is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips! My whole head is sick, and my whole heart is faint."

Others may talk of their wills and their powers, their duties and their deserts; but, as for me, I can scarce lift up my eyes to heaven when I consider myself; rather with the publican, my brother, I must smite upon my breast and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Instead of looking on myself as a fine holy creature, who can appear confidently before my

God; I shrink with contrition and shame at the thought, that I have done little else than dishonor him all my days, and deserve nothing for the best thing I was ever able to do, but confusion and sorrow.

O what a plague is a man's own heart when he knows himself; and how little doth he appear in his own eyes, when he hath been made to view, in some true light and degree, the vastness of the purity and perfections of God!

And yet, O marvelous to say, God is pleased, by all the weak and contrary things in me, to magnify his own power and glory. By these, he makes me out of humor with myself; by these, he drives me from a thousand refuges of lies; by these, he compels me to cleave unto him, as my only rock, succor, and remedy. In this way, I can feel, as well as read, what the apostle meant, where he says, "Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me:—for when I am weak, then I am strong."—These are strange paradoxes to the natural heart; but blessed is the man, who can truly understand and enter into the experience of them.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE BELIEVER RECEIVES FOOD, AS WELL AS LIGHT, IN THE WORD AND DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

THE mere notion of divine things, without their power, cannot profit the soul. As a man may be poor with the plan of a large estate, of which he hath no possession; so a professor of christianity may have the bible before him, and may be able to raise very high and fine speculations from it, and yet have no

e knowledge or enjoyment of the truths which it ıtains.

A minister may preach of these truths with great arness, great readiness, great noise; and yet have true savor, no solid experience, and no real comnion of the truths themselves within him. What ›ves this is, that he is not the same man in the pul- and in the world. The doctrines of the gospel will ve for orations as well as other topics; nay, will ve for the best orations, because there is more of ›limity and truth in them than in any other.

An author likewise may write about divine revela- n, and all the mysteries of redemption, with preci- n, accuracy, force, and elegance, and yet be destie of the main concern, which is the faith and inward rception of these things for his own soul. I would al fairly and closely with my own self in this respect, well as with others; and I will own, that my light is beyond my liveliness; and though I humbly trust at I have some little real life in my knowledge of ɔd and his truths, yet I acknowledge with an aching art, that it is indeed but little, too little, and much ıs than my own fondness for myself, or vanity, or ide, or conceit (for, Lord, thou knowest, and I know, at I have all these in abundance within me!) will ffer me at times to think that I have. Perceiving en my own weakness, and the deceivableness of unghteousness in my own heart; I am able to see, and t to pity and bear with, the same infirmities and de- cts in others.

However, no real believer can find much or long tisfaction in any notions or conceptions of divine uth, though very sublime, clear, full, extensive, and ›nvincing, without something more in them and from ıem. He doth not despise head knowledge, indeed, ecause by this he can see the wisdom of God; but e would have heart knowledge too, because he wishes

to taste, to enjoy, to be assured of his interest in the love of God. He can no more feed upon words and syllables in his soul, than he can live upon air only for his body.

The Lord, therefore, when he imparts the demonstration of the spirit to a man, imparts it not in word but in power. Thus the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. He cannot receive it aright without this power: he cannot live upon it but by this power; nor hold out in living and believing to the end but by the same power.

This gracious feeding of the soul upon the things of God is its greatest comfort here upon earth, and one of its bright evidences for heaven. It is a secret holy act, carried on best without the clutter of the animal passions, or the intercourse of corporal things. The holy bread was eaten in the holy place, before the holy light; and all out of the air, or view, or correspondence, of the world. Thus, in the secret places of the Most High, the soul feeds upon Christ, beholds Christ, and enjoys all its divine communion with the things of God. And when it hath thus tasted that the Lord is gracious, it loves to be with him, and says earnestly as Peter did, "it is good to be here." The carnal notion even of the best things will no longer satisfy or feed it.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ON THE SPIRIT OF SCOFFING.

It is no less ungracious than unwise to indulge a scoffing temper in our souls. Pride and an unmortified opinion of self are the true origin of this evil. It is the more dangerous, and not so much to the scorned,

as to the scorning, when set off with wit and mimiory, point and satire. But attic salt is not the salt of the covenant; and, in sacred things, especially, is not to be used by a Christian.

It may be diverting to mimic and *to take off* others, in order to expose their foibles or defects; but how and to whom is it diverting? Is it to the humble, spiritual, and mortified mind? No, but to the profane and the carnal; or, at least, to what is carnal and profane in a Christian, which the very principle of all others, that he would not strengthen or encourage, but subdue.

There is so much inhumanity, as well as irreligion, in this jeering temper, and usually so little good sense, that the Christian is bound to oppose it both in himself and in others. Cheerfulness is his privilege; but surely he may be happy in his own mind without planting thorns elsewhere; nay, it proceeds from the want of true happiness, if he can endure at any rate such a contemptible shadow of it. True peace is gentle in itself, and glows most sweetly in diffusing gentleness and kindness on every side. The happy Christian would increase his own joy by making, if possible, every one happy about him.

CHAPTER XXX.

IT IS A GREAT POINT OF CHRISTIAN WISDOM TO DISTINGUISH WELL BETWEEN NATURE AND GRACE.

EVERY real believer hath an old man and a new, an Esau and a Jacob, a carnal mind and a spiritual mind, within him: And these are contrary the one to the other; so that he cannot always do the right things

that he would do for God, nor crush the evil things that he would not do, within himself.

These opposite principles have two opposite laws, or rules of action and power. The inclination and effect of the one are constantly directed to self, and to carnal things for the indulgence of self; and those of the other, to God, and to spiritual things for the glory of God.

Men under nature, having only one of these principles, cannot, in their natural state, discern the other. It is by grace, as by a rule, that they are able to measure nature, and to know the proportions of both grace and nature, within themselves. "He that is spiritual, judgeth, (or) discerneth, all things; yet he himself is judged of no man.

Nature in the Christian is for cleaving to sense, in its own doings, and to its own powers, even in religion: But grace in his soul is for living by faith, above and often against the feelings of sense, upon the truth of God, and upon his work and working, for life and salvation.

Nature loves to show and set off itself, and to be admired as excellent, eminent, wise, and great, in the eyes of men. Grace doth not set much by itself, but is lowly and humble, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, dreads the applauses of men, and makes the soul see that it is so mere a nothing in itself, that it must receive every thing good, both the least spark of grace and the bright crown of glory, from God in Christ.

Nature is quarrelsome, impatient, and full of restlessness, desiring its own objects immediately and independently, and applying all it receives to its own ease or aggrandizement. Grace seeketh not her own, but the things which are Jesus Christ's, makes the spirit meek and mild, and patient, and quiets it with the will and love of God in all things.

Nature hates the cross, and shuns it as a bitter and

evil thing; it struggles hard not to feel it, and, when it feels it, to get rid of it without any other consideration than that it is painful and hinders all indulgences and gratifications. But grace submits to the cross with humble resignation, and desires that God's purpose may be answered in it; like as a wise patient wishes that his physic may have its due effect, however unpleasant and distasteful it may be in the act of receiving.

When nature attempts holy duties, as she sometimes will either in fear or in pride, it is to make herself rich and increased in goods by them, so that she may have something wherewith to purchase even of God himself. But grace comes to the obedience of faith, not to live or purchase life, but because she is truly alive already to God; and she acts not for her own exaltation, but for the glory of him, who only can exalt, and who fills the hungry with good things, while the rich he sends empty away.

Nature admires dignity, and parade, and pomp, and outward splendor; it seeks to be pleased with sweet sounds, fine language, decorated places, and genteel company; and all this in religion too. Whereas grace shuns and distastes all gay appearances of earth, thinks of Christ in a stable, and of all he did and suffered to stain the pride of flesh and blood; and receives the favor of God as a precious pearl for its own eternal value, and not for the sake of any outward things, different in kind from its own.

Nature loves life, and to see good days in this world, and as many of them as possible; it shudders to give up its temporal enjoyments and carnal hopes, and would endure a great alloy of care and trouble, rather than part with the lying vanities, to which it is wedded, and in which it delights. Grace, contrariwise, can say with the holy man, "I would not live always (upon earth, if I might;) for I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." Grace can

think upon death as a friend, and hath often met him as such; looking forward to the crown of glory, which death can only lead to, but never can take away: And all its trials here only cause a stronger breathing and expectation of the heavenly home.

Nature is formed to speak, and loves to be heard, and will be angry if not regarded, and will do much to be seen and known. Grace is slow to speak, and slow to wrath; wishes to hear, and learn, and understand; delights not to be in the chief seat, but is content with the lowest; and had rather lay up spiritual treasure in the heart, than babble it away, for selfish aims, with the tongue. It is not petulant or vexed if disregarded, but commits itself and the whole of the matter to God.

Nature draweth all from its own fund, and carrieth all back, and with interest if possible, to itself again. But grace receiveth all from God, and is never so truly delighted, as when God receiveth the whole of the glory, as his just return.

These are a few of the many distinct operations of nature and grace. But sometimes they are so perplexed and interwoven with each other, through the craft and duplicity of the fallen natural principle, that it requires the greatest watchfulness and attention of the Christian, to unravel and divide them. The fact is, the two principles live at one time, act at one time, and will be found in one and the same persons at all times and in all things, while he lives upon earth. The Christian cannot avoid the activity of his natural or carnal mind; though, by that faith and prayer, which removes the spiritual mountains of difficulty, he is to strive and may prevail against its high rule and predominancy. Carnality will exist, while he exists below; but it must not be the reigning and triumphant principle within him. On the other hand, grace, which is pure and simple in all its own acts and inten-

ions, and resolves every thing with a single eye and a single heart into God, must take the lead, and bring the other into the closest captivity and obedience that can be unto Christ. This is the daily battle and warfare, which passes within the Christian, and which no eye can see, but the eye of God and his own; yea, not his own always, nor always alike. Thus, when grace prevails, there ensues what is called mortification, self-denial, humiliation, renunciation, and all the other exercises, which are painful to the flesh, or nature, and its will and ways. On the contrary, when nature is uppermost, there ever will arise coldness towards God, faintness in duty, doubts, reasonings, discomforts, fear of man, fear of death, and a whole world full of weaknesses, hindrances, and temptations. By the superiority of these different effects in the soul, may easily be seen, if attended to, the superiority of one or other of their respective principles. When there is a strong animal or carnal nature in the believer with a good measure of grace, and a trial comes of a powerful and threatening kind, O what a tumult is raised within! Nature struggles for ease, and winds, and turns, and frets, and laments, and uses a thousand shifts to carry off the believer from the battle, or to melt away his heart in the midst of it. Grace, on the other hand, tells him that now is his time to act like a Christian, to lay hold upon Christ and his promises, to take up the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, and the helmet of salvation, and to withstand at least, if not even to meet, the enemy; that he shall conquer the trial by suffering the will of God, it being his present duty, to trust, to hope, to pray, to wait; and that, in a short time at the utmost, all shall end well, and redound both to his Redeemer's honor and his own improvement. What conflicts, perturbations, hopes, resignations, consolations, will not the Christian find in the opposition of the carnal and spiritual life; when temptations, trou-

bles, or trials of any kind are to try the strength of both? And yet, after the temptation, it is in some measure with him as it was with Christ after his; comforts, like angels, will minister unto him. There is such a peaceable fruit of righteousness succeeding to these grievous things, as will make the believer a most ample amends for all his sorrows. But if this fruit should be deferred in this life, it will be the more welcome and glorious, when the soul bursts the bonds of clay, and leaves sin and a sinful nature behind it.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ON TEMPTATIONS.

It is a great part of the Christian warfare to encounter temptations. When a man truly becomes Christ's soldier, he is armed from head to foot by him; because from head to foot will his enemies attack him, with all sorts of weapons, for distress at least, if not for destruction. He hath, because he needs, the whole armor of God, that he may both stand and withstand, during the evil day of this mortal life.

O how many fiery darts are thrown, with all the vehemence of spirits, against the Christian's soul! If his armor doth not sit close upon him, and if the shield of faith be not well and constantly held up to catch and repel the assaults; how many sore, and almost venomous wounds, will he not endure? Nay, if the Christian think to be only upon the defence, and fight not in his turn; it will be with him, as it is in all defensive wars among men, very troublesome, and very disadvantageous. He hath therefore a weapon given him, that he may attack too; and when he wields, in

the strength of his captain, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; the great spiritual foe remembers the three deep strokes he received by it from Christ himself, and shrinks away from its edge. If the Christian should be so unwise as to fight this enemy by his own might, and without this armor; he would suffer as a man must do, that would encounter a whole host in array (every individual of which is almost infinitely stronger than himself) naked, unsupported, unarmed. None know the strength of the world, the flesh, and the devil, but those who have life and are called to oppose them; just as the force of a stream is tried by the resistance made against it. The people of Christ too often fall into this vain way of fighting, through a presumption of their own conduct and power, and therefore are often brought off from the field wounded and half dead: And it is through the mercy and grace of their Lord, that they are not entirely captured and destroyed. They are more ready to look to their armor and call upon their leader in great trials, and therefore they prevail: But when they despise the strength of a little temptation, and fight against it in their own, then it is that they are often taught their inward and natural weakness by losing the day. In their captain's armor, in his strength, and by his sword, they must resist the devil; and then to their joy shall they find, that he will presently fly away from them.

Nothing escapes the vigilance of this foe. He observes the particular constitutions of persons; and he makes his attacks upon all the weak and unguarded parts. He suits his devices to the frame of their dispositions; and, if they are ignorant of them, he will often make sad havoc and distress.

He also knows, that the Christian hath traitors in his own bosom, once under full diabolical command, and now not fully suppressed and confined. These

he bribes, entices, advises, corresponds with, and acts by; so that, when the assault is made from without, these suspicious inmates are not idle within, but join hand, head, and heart (as it were) to throw all open to the enemy.

Hence, for these inbred foes, envy, pride, malice, lust, and all the confederacy of black and carnal principles, satan finds out and proposes their several objects of desire. These are soon converted into engines of war against the soul; and if the Christian cannot bring his very thoughts into captivity to the law of Christ, they will lead him in bonds (as it were) to his old master, who used, before he was a Christian, to take him captive at his will. What disgrace doth this bring to his holy profession; and what misery, before and after his recovery, to himself!

Satan hath also sly and subtle temptations, perverted from religion itself, by which he often assaults the mind. Sometimes he will raise snares from zeal, love, light, enlargement, and success in duties, by which to flatter the Christian into a high opinion of himself, and of his gifts and graces, in order to take him off his guard, or to unclothe him of his humility. When he can make a man proud, he makes him like himself; and when unclean, like a beast. At other times he will inject the very poison and curse of his own diabolical spirit, by darting evil thoughts; despairing or blasphemous suggestions; vile conceptions of Christ, his word, his work, and all his salvation; preposterous, doubting, distracting, and presuming fancies; and an almost infinite variety of abominable suggestions; which, if the soul be unarmed and unguarded, will harass it to the utmost distress. He hath no pity; nor will he leave off for groans and wailing, agonies or tears. These rather encourage him, if there be nothing but these. The only thing he dreads is the sword of the Spirit; and the only thing he cannot

pierce is the armor of God. Therefore, when all this sad business is going forward, the Christian should not lay crying on the ground like one bereft of his senses, but should call upon his Captain for the armor and the sword, and with these should venture on boldly, trusting to the divine strength which is promised, against the foe. When he can do this, the conflict will be soon over. It is yielding, hearkening, reasoning, and parleying, which occasion all the mischief.

I can talk of all this my fellow Christian, and I know it likewise to be right and true; but I am often beset, and have been often as much to seek as thou canst be, in this hard, yet glorious service. To this moment I feel my own miserable weakness, when left in the least degree to myself. I have had my drubbings, my falls, my horrors, my conflicts, as well as thou; and I have been taught by them, though with much slowness, (I speak it with shame and sorrow) to fly to the right refuge, to lay hold of the right strength, to buckle on the right armor, and to fall on with the right sword. When I have done this with most alertness and with the most unreserved confidence in my divine Master, I have been most successful, and most easily have prevailed. When I have lingered, or dallied, or tampered with my foe, or else thought I could cope with him by myself, because he hath appeared under a mean disguise; then I have fainted and failed; then have I sunk, and been surely overthrown. My rebuffs have made me a little more wary of my own heart, as well as of my spiritual adversaries; and I find it the best way to begin speedily with prayer to Him that heareth, that I may truly be ready for whatever may come upon me.

While we are in the flesh, all this must be more or less our daily exercise. And the use of it is, chiefly to keep our hearts from pride and sloth, to bring down

the love of self in all its desires, and the love of sin in all its forms, to endear Christ to our souls in all the ways of his salvation, to cause us to give up ourselves to him with less reserve, to wean us from earth and earthly comforts, and to fix our affections more firmly on heaven. If all this ensue, we shall then have happily disappointed the devil, and beaten him with his own weapons; and therefore shall rejoice for every trial and conflict, which have led us on towards the attainment of that blessed state of mind, which is the true life and hope of a Christian in this world. O that I may remember these things for myself; while I am aiming to stir up the minds of others to the remembrance of them! Lord, thy strength is made perfect in weakness, and thy wisdom in folly; I call upon thee, therefore, and upon thee alone, to be the guide, the help, the defender, and deliverer of my soul! Thou art faithful, that hast promised; and here I rest my safety and salvation.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ON ADVERSITY.

WE naturally love the world, and the things that are in the world; and this love, unsubdued, is the sole cause and ground of what are called mortifications and disappointments from the world. If the love of Christ prevailed more in us, it would not be in the power of outward things to give us so much pain as they do; or rather, if this love were perfect in us, we should be ashamed and sorry that these things should give us any pain at all.

This is the truth; but how do we use it? Very often, in the time of trial, we make no other use, than to assent to it as a truth, and there leave it. Reflections of this kind are orations to the winds, unless grace shall second and enforce them. The most trifling loss, as I have often observed in myself and others, is sufficient to unhinge and throw us out of order; if we have no stronger power than our own to keep us in it.

There is not a plant upon earth, how unsightly and bitter soever, but which hath an end for its being. God, likewise, hath not intended his providential works, however adverse or disagreeable to our sense, but for some just purpose and design. There is a needs be, if we fall into divers temptations. And if needful, then they are right and profitable, and will appear to be so at the last.

We have many evil humors, that require correction; and God sends adversity, as a medicine to the soul. When it comes with grace into the spirit of a Christian, how doth it soften and blunt his rough and acid dispositions, how reform and lower his swelling and confident frames, how chasten and subdue his restless and impatient tempers; while the better part, his renewed mind, gathers strength, and holiness, and resignation, and hope? We shall indeed thank God heartily for all our adversities by and by; and, though they are not to be counted as any part of our inheritance, we shall rejoice eternally, that they were graciously made a part of the means for bringing us to it.

The apostle Paul was a chosen vessel, and dearly beloved of the Lord; but the Lord did not say concerning him, what great things he was to do or enjoy, (though nobody perhaps ever did more for Christ, or enjoyed more of him upon earth) but what great things he must suffer for my name's sake. The flesh shrinks at this; but grace can enable the soul to count

it all joy when it falls into divers temptations; not for the grief that is in them, for that would be unnatural, but for the peaceable fruits of righteousness which they shall produce in the end.

We must pray, then, to trust the wisdom and love of God in all sorrowful dispensations; since he doth not willingly or wantonly afflict his children, nor send one sorrow more than what is absolutely necessary to their true edification and welfare.

When we can bear all trouble as a part of the burden of Christ, and can obtain his assistance to bear it with us; we shall find it daily grow lighter and lighter, and at length become upon us like the burden of wings to a bird, enabling us to fly the swifter and higher towards heaven.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ON PROSPERITY.

God's people are seldom trusted with much prosperity; and when they are, it very rarely appears for their good. The things of earth and time in affluence or abundance, have a fascinating power over the carnal senses, entice them first into the ways of evil, and then (if grace prevent not) intoxicate them with it. How many spiritual sorts are there in the world, who though averse to gross intemperance, are reeling instead of running in the path of duty, their heads being turned with the fumes of this earth, and their hearts waxed gross through the abundance of her delicacies? And it is one dreadful proof of the strength of this intoxication upon them, when they hate to be told of it, and feel angry, not at themselves, but at the friendly and faithful informer.

The gaiety, parade, lightness, and lofty airs of many religious professors too well show what a dangerous thing it is to possess much of this world, and how easily our hearts may be made drunk and then drowned with sensuality, if not in perdition. If Christ and his apostles were now upon earth in their plain and lowly form, it is much to be feared, that they would be thought hardly good company enough for many of the present race of genteel and modish professors of religion.

It is an excellent prayer, which Christians in worldly prosperity cannot remember too often; "In all time of our *wealth*, good Lord, deliver us." We want his help, then, more if possible than in adversity; lest the lust of other things, entering in, should choke the word, and it become unfruitful. We have weak heads and a disordered appetite, which are soon overcharged with a full cup of temporal prosperity. They were filled (says the Lord speaking by the prophet to the Jews) they were filled, and their heart was exalted: therefore have they forgotten me.

There is no doubt, but that Christians with worldly riches may do abundance of worldly good to others; and it is one proof, that God is in them of a truth when they do so: Yet, there is very great reason to pray, that, while they are God's stewards to feed other people, they may be careful not to be starved themselves, and that no pride may arise in their hearts, through these outward displays of zeal for the Lord of hosts. These may seem great things to men; but if we remember the widow and her two mites, we may understand, that something else is greater before God, than any administration only of carnal and temporal things.

Our hearts need no damps of this world to cool them. On the contrary, God by troubles frequently stirs up his own grace and life in them, as we stir our fires, that they may kindle more freely, shine more brightly, and glow more strongly for our comfort. Whatever draws

us nearest to God, cannot be real adversity: Whatever entices us from him, deserves not the name of prosperity.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LUXURY INDECENT FOR CHRISTIANS.

LUXURY is to pride, what the body is to the soul. It gives substance to that depraved temper, which satan occasioned to man, and which reigns in himself with the most malignant subtlety, ruling also, where it is permitted, the faculties of creatures and the grossness of matter. It first reduced him from angel to devil; and it hath degraded mankind almost to both devil and beast.

A very great part of the world's pursuit is indulgence to the flesh, by procuring, not the mere necessaries (for these are in a small compass) but the pomps, the shows, the imaginary comforts, or the real luxuries, of this present life. If they have much goods laid up for many years, no higher thought remains, but to take their ease, to eat, to drink, and be merry. They have strange and wretched notions of spiritual and eternal enjoyments: Heaven and heavenly things are necessarily in their very nature too refined for those, whose heart is ever in the dirt, and whose whole life and hope are supported by what lives and grows upon it. Like a man whom I remember to have seen, they have no "desire to sit singing upon a bare cloud (as he expressed it) all the day long, without any thing to eat or to drink." This was his idea of heaven: And have those people any better or more solid thoughts of its glories, who prefer to them (as the men of this world uniformly do)

the poor vile trash and sordid attainment of the earth? Alas so it is; no natural man hath any true regard for God or his soul, but only for his carcass and the world.

The primitive Christians were distinguished as well for the plainness and simplicity of their manners, as for an exact frugality in all their affairs. They thought, and with great truth, that to do otherwise would be both unseemly for their profession and injurious to the poor. People, who want all for themselves, as the luxurious ever must (except in some rare cases) can have but little, if any thing, to give to him that needeth; and, what is worse, a luxurious pampered person hath usually no heart to give at all, but hath lost his bowels of compassion, through the excess and voluptuousness reigning within him. Hence it is, that the very rich and very great are commonly hard hearted; while in the middle ranks of life, both sympathy and benevolence are frequently found to lighten the load of woe. These, it is true, may be all mere nature; but they are however not the least precious remains among its ruins.

To glut the stomach, is to starve the mind; vainly to dress up the body, is to strip the soul; to appear great before men, is really to be little in the eyes of God, to be anxious for this world alone, is to lose the true enjoyment both of it and a better. Yet all these compose the grandest wisdom of this world. But can such be the object, the pursuit, the practice of a Christian? Can the pilgrim, or traveller, the stranger and sojourner upon earth, who talks of seeking a better country, and a heavenly, make it his business or delight to indulge his flesh and carnal affections in modes like these? It seems indeed a sort of burlesque upon godliness, that a creature pampered, glutted, adorned and wallowing in luxurious life, should solemnly profess meekness and lowness of mind, abstraction from a sinful world, deadness to earthly vanity, humble expectations of heaven, and a life of faith and communion with God till heaven be

attained. I am not a monk, nor monkishly inclined; but surely the modern luxury among many professors is neither the characteristic nor ornament of Christian life, and cannot from its own nature be the means appointed either to win or to wean men from mammon to God. It is indeed with pain and reluctance, that this subject is here mentioned, and especially that there is so much occasion for mentioning it, in our day and in our land. To use, and liberally to use, God's temporal mercies with humble thankfulness, is one thing; but to nourish our carnal hearts as in a day of slaughter, to live only for ourselves, and to be filled with a fulness of earth instead of God, is quite another. The apostle speaks of using the world, and not abusing it, plainly intimating the difficulty and the danger. For this reason most probably it is, that the Lord keeps the bulk of his people out of worldly snares by poverty and trouble, for which they will see more cause to thank him hereafter, than the wealthy and the great for all their riches. When the world lays heavy and close upon the heart, O with what sluggish slowness doth it mount up towards heaven!

Lord, above all thy gifts, give me thyself! I may be happy without the creatures, but I must be wretched for ever without thee. Against all my carnal affections and desires, above all my apprehensions and views, beyond all my hopes and expectations; O do thou lead me through time to eternity, and be my life, my love, my light, my Lord, and my all in all.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THERE ARE MANY FIRST, THAT SHALL BE LAST.

OUR opinion of persons and things is usually taken from outward forms and appearances; but God looketh

on the heart and spirit, which are the true and holy substantial essence or being.

What a wonderful revolution shall the day of God make upon the earth! Many high and towering professors, extolled by others and prized by themselves, shall be glad to take even the meanest and the lowest rooms, deeply thankful not to be quite thrust out of the kingdom; while some poor dejected and despised souls, who passed their days almost unknowing and unknown with respect to the world, shall shine forth as the stars in the firmament of heaven, to the surprise and astonishment of every eye.

We greatly mistake, in general, with respect to spiritual glory. It doth not consist in the splendor of gifts and talents, or any bodily exercise (as the apostle calls it) of the animal frame, but in the less glaring, though far more solid, ornament of a meek and quiet spirit; not in the attraction or admiration of men, but in the love and enjoyment of God; not in the subtle and lofty aspirings even of the inward man, but in self-abasement, simplicity, humbleness and sincerity of mind, resignation of soul to God, victory over self, and every thing else that belongs to true lowliness and profound humiliation. This is real and living glory; but not the glory of the world, or of the flesh, for these neither understand nor desire it. Alas! how little is it considered, that an outward religious act, and religion itself, are *two* things, very distinct and very separable! Scribes, pharisees, and hypocrites, have performed the one with the greatest care and exactness; but, all the while, were farther from the kingdom of God than even publicans and harlots: The other, consisting in divine life and inward union of the soul with Christ, is the portion and experience of none but the children of God.

We may be proud of pretended virtues; and, perhaps, it is possible to be proud even of grace itself, opposite as it is to that fallen principle of corrupted na-

ture; but it is not so possible to think ourselves nothing, and to be contented with the slight and contempt of others; to prefer all God's children to ourselves, and to place our seat far below theirs; to love our meekest and our humblest thoughts, and to hate bitterly the emotions of pride, and the urgings of anger and arrogance. Yet all this is the true and solid dignity of a Christian soul, and brings it nearest to the likeness of Christ, if not nearest to his throne.

O Lord, help me to understand myself. May I wish to see, not how great and good (as flesh would have it,) but how mean and vile, I am. Preserve me from high thoughts of myself; for these become not a sinful, dying worm, who lives every moment upon a breath of air; nor yet do they become a redeemed sinner, whose only plea must be mercy, who hath nothing of his own but sin, and who by grace alone can be saved, according to thy gift, O Lord, my God!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

IT IS THROUGH GRACE, THAT ALL ORDINANCES ARE RIGHTLY USED AND BECOME BENEFICIAL.

As there is a talent of speaking with grace, the things that are true and profitable; so there is a talent of hearing with grace, that those things may be received with edification. We may too often see and bewail a customary slight mode of hearing, which instead of enlivening, deadens; instead of warming, fixes the cold; instead of promoting the life of God within, only confirms the life of the flesh throughout.

Some are for hearing a variety of preachers, others a multitude of sermons; not for profit but for pleasure,

not to digest and turn the discourses into spiritual nourishment, but to satisfy the hurry and bustle of nature, which doth not love patient reflection, nor the meditating labor of the soul. To hear only and commend this, and that, and the other preacher, however excellent and gracious, is poor employment indeed, which requires very little sense, and less grace, to perform. To set up men and forget God, to be extolling one man above another, and to be ready to quarrel and abuse for the sake of one poor worm against another; is all of it nothing more, than the vileness of the carnal nature perversely crept into religious profession, and all of it equally wretched, impertinent, and vain. If this were the whole that is to be found in religion, it would not be a bad wish, that one's "life might rather be spent with philosophers."

To hear for amusement, to be delighted with flowry language, to be charmed, with action, person, manner, and voice, may do very well for the theatre or senate; but to attend upon God, to hear his word as for one's life, to be filled with the solid importance of divine things, and to carry them home in the heart for comfort and strength in the experience; this is quite another kind of business, which doth not so much engage the carnal mind or ear, as it employs the gifts, the graces, the most fervent exertions, and the holiest affections of the soul. The one is rank abuse of a sacred institution, and perverted to lull the soul asleep in carnal security, under the notion of a religious engagement: The other is finding, in the use of the means, the true advantage which the Lord intended by them.

It is better likewise to hear one sermon, and then to recollect it, to feed and ponder upon it, and to turn the matter of it into prayer, than to be present at four, five, or six in a day, as some have been, and not to be able at last to give a tolerable account of any one of them. The divine life of a Christian doth not consist in mere

hearing, any more than his natural life in always eating; but in digesting, and bringing what he hears, as so much nourishment, into the very frame and strength of his soul.

Faith must be mixed with this, and all ordinances and sacraments, otherwise the outward man alone acts, while the inner man is asleep or dead; and so that which should have been for wealth, only becomes an occasion of falling.

"*How* have I heard, not *how much?*" is the best enquiry. Our Lord directs us to consider it well, where he says, "take heed how ye hear." And if we reflect, that God's word is "a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death, in them that do hear it; surely, in so solemn an affair, we ought to pray before we hear, to watch unto prayer in hearing, and to mix faith and prayer with what we have heard, that it may turn to our good, and not to our sorrow.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ON THE PROFITABLE HEARING OF THE WORD.

THIS subject is of so much importance, as to demand some farther reflections.

It is a trite observation, that we have TWO ears, and but ONE tongue. The natural inference however becomes the more important, when authorized by the Holy Ghost: "Let every man be swift to hear, and slow to speak."

But though swiftness of hearing be right, it is only so upon just principles and for a proper end. A person may be swift to hear evil, through the corruption of nature, for no other purpose than to practise it. In

such a case, slowness, or deafness itself, is comparatively a blessing.

It appears then, that there are two sorts of hearing, or faculties, the spiritual and the carnal, the right and the wrong: The one formed and impowered by grace: the other left, as it came into the world, under the perverseness and depravity of nature. We will consider both of these as briefly as possible.

When man fell from God, he not only lost the right use of the natural faculties, which consisted in raising spiritual and divine ideas from the outward objects; but the faculties themselves were diminished, and instead of serving the Creator and showing forth his glory in the knowledge and happiness of a perfect creature, were corrupted to obey a fallen spirit in every ministration of sin, whether in filthiness, baseness, ignorance, or malignity. The ear, among these, became the organ of a depraved understanding, and is often put, by a figure, for the depraved understanding itself. Thus, because men in their state of nature are so besotted and blinded by sin, as to have no understanding (or what is worse than none) in spiritual things; so they are said to have no ears in those things. Accordingly, our Lord frequently addresses himself to those, who have ears to hear; manifestly implying, that the faithful only can hear to purpose, and that all others are, in a certain sense, without ears, that is, incapable of understanding what they outwardly do hear. This corrupted faculty cannot therefore receive the truth; but, through gross misapprehension, can only pervert it, turning good into bad, and the bad into worse and worse.

The true faculty is indeed a new creation, and consequently the operation and gift of God. The Lord makes the hearing ear and the seeing eye, said the wise man; or, as Elihu expresses it to the same purpose, "God openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruc-

tion." In vain might men speak, as Ezekiel would have spoken to that emblem of sinners spiritually dead, the dry bones, unless the Lord of power vouchsafe to bless and to impart the truth and strength of a right understanding to the mind.

But where this new faculty is given, the believer should remember, with anxious concern, that even there also remaineth the old. They both remain in the same person, and often produce, if care be not taken, and a better care than their own, a sort of neutral exercise of faculties, employing them upon the very best things to no purpose at all, and sometimes to purposes, which, it might be thought, no gracious person with the least good faculty could allow or endure. The fact is, they hear the truth too much in their old man, they do not mix faith with what they hear, and so they become triflers in divine things, and grow insipid and indifferent to them. Their new man is not renewed day by day, through holy meditation and prayer, and therefore seems to grow weaker; while their old man grows stronger and stronger in the things of the flesh and the world. "They do not (as the martyr of old said) join the ears of their head and their heart together."

Hence, in Christian profession, we have such just complaint of heavy ears. Persons shall have been long under the word, and yet shall have profited so little for the time, that they appear like infants when they ought to be full grown, or dwarfs, and misshapen dwarfs too, at the age of maturity. This dulness of hearing often makes it needful, that such should be taught again the first principles of the oracles of God; because (as the apostle says) being babes, they have no experience in the word of righteousness. What a strange sight is this; a man in leading strings; a person in years wailing for the breast! And yet meat, and especially strong meat, is not good for him: he

cannot digest it. He must, poor soul, have nothing but milk: and it is well, if the only pure milk will satisfy him.

There is also, in Christian profession; what the scripture calls an uncircumcised ear. A man, with an uncircumcised ear, is unsubdued by what he hears, so that his thoughts are not brought into captivity, nor into sweet subjection unto Christ. He will hear for himself, and by himself. His soul is not bent into meekness under the word; but he comes to it as a critic or a judge, with a high look and a lofty heart, to square all things by his own rule and reason, and to determine all by his own measure and understanding. When the truth is made particular to him, he acts like some high professors of old, and like all who are uncircumcised in heart and ears (Acts vii. 51.)—he resists the Holy Ghost. Such an one receiveth not correction. Truth is perished to him, and cut off from his mouth. He is therefore not the better for what he hears, but the worse, converting the wholesome nourishment, through his cachetic or bad habit, into poison or disease. In process of time, he grows both careless and hardened under the word; and, being now sermon proof, receives no more real impression from the gospel, than the flinty rock from a shower of rain. Alas! alas! how often may one bewail these uncircumcised ears!

The apostle reminds us also of itching ears, which are not so desirous of their own proper exercise of receiving the truth, as of being tickled and amused. A light thing, a mere feather, will answer this purpose better than that two edged sword, which cuts beneath the skin, and penetrates to the very thoughts and intents of the heart. The itching ear takes a wonderful pleasure in quaint or odd expressions, or in flowing, polished, or rhetorical phrases and language. To it there are no such charms as the charms of man-

ner and words; a rich and glowing diction, a correct and masterly style, the grace of delivery, the force of reason, and the sublimity of thought. These are excellencies indispensable and invaluable to the curious ear. A good story, especially if there be any wit in it, will tickle it almost to an ecstacy. Sometimes mere rhodomontade will serve the end, which is, to divert and be diverted. A pathetic or melancholy discourse will also tickle well an itching ear, though in a different way; for, if the animal passions be moved, if the old man be wrought upon, if the common feelings of the carnal nature be excited with any degree of emotion, these will gratify and please that carnal nature, as in hearing tragedies and oratorios, even to rapture and excess, so as almost to be mistaken for religion and grace. In all this, there may not be one particle of the life of the new man, which is renewed after the image of him that created him. I do not mean, that a Christian is to be divested of the common feelings of humanity, but that he is not to mistake these for the actings of grace in the things of God, nor from the word of God to seek for so low an object as the gratification of these. He is not to be entertained, but edified; not to be amused, but corrected; not to be pleased only, but profited; not to crave indulgence to the desires of the flesh and of the mind, for this every worldling craves, but through grace to subdue his evil propensities and affections, and to confine nature within its bounds, that the life of Christ may be made manifest, and that the fruits of faith may abound to the divine glory. O how much more wise and happy is this for the soul, than the mean and trifling enjoyment that can be procured for itching ears!

There is also, to mention no more, what a gracious and dear friend of mine has well styled that monster in profession, who is all ear. No faculty, in religious matters, but this one. No head to apprehend, no

heart to love and experience, no hands to act for Christ, no feet to walk in the obedience of God; but all—all ear! A new preacher, a fine preacher, a long sermon, sermon after sermon, discourses about the talents of preachers and the beauty of sermons, and sometimes matters not quite so good as these, are objects of supreme delight for too many, who rather wish to hear about Christ than to live upon him, and to have a good seat under the sound of the gospel, than to be enjoying the power of it. O what a poor sort of professing life is this! To mistake air for food, and mere hearing for godliness, alas! what will this avail the soul, when it shall need strength and courage to resist the powers of darkness, and to enter the gloomy valley of the dead!

The true servants of God have, in a certain subordinate sense, their ears opened or pierced, according to the meaning of the rite in the law; and thus they are made his own for ever. They come willingly, in the day of his power, to the door of his house, even to Christ the only door of the true tabernacle which God hath pitched and not man; and there each of them joyfully declares; "I would not, and in thy strength I will not, go away, O Lord, from thee, because I love thee and I love thine house, and because it is good for me to be with thee." By this spiritual operation, they are made alive to God, and are enabled spiritually to hear his word, and to have it written in their inward parts, and thus to serve and live for God in Christ with life eternal. They cannot endure another service; and any voice, but the voice of their Master, they will neither delight in, nor obey. As dutiful servants, and adopted children, they listen to his holy word, follow his heavenly will, seek not their own but his honor and glory, and count nothing of so much value beneath the sun as to finish their course with joy. O my soul, mayest thou be found with these, when the

Lord shall make up his jewels, and shall spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him! Thou shalt then enter into his house indeed, and dwell with him for ever and ever.

Another type in the law shows the inward virtue of the divine life. The sanctifying oil was not only to be put upon the *right* hand, the *right* foot, and the *right* ear of the leper, but upon the *extremities*, the thumb, the great toe, the tip of those right members; in order to show, that in our renewing by the Holy Spirit, we must expect all true strength, even the least and to the utmost, all our right obedience, and all our hearing to profit, from that *unction of the Holy One*. This anointing, which is received of Christ, even the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot receive, abideth in the real Christian; and by this, in fact, he becomes a Christian, that is, an anointed person; and the same anointing teacheth him all things, and is true and not a lie. Thus he hears, and hears aright. He hears inwardly, and with life; and by grace in this hearing increases life. Sounds, mere sounds, are nothing, and words alone, nothing; but the word and truth of Christ, spiritually received and experimentally digested, are in his eye, and heart, and ear, the all in all of every ordinance and proclamation of the gospel.

I would come into the power of these things, O my Lord, more and more; and I lament with deep compunction, that my progression is so small, my true hearing so dull, my affections so cold, my faith so weak, my hope so drooping, and my whole man so often disordered and defiled by sin. O how great and difficult a thing is it to be a Christian! To live, and hope, and walk, truly by the faith of thee the Son of God! Do thou, who art the High Priest of my profession, circumcise and pierce my ear, that I may be made affectionately like thine own for ever; anoint it also with thine *holy oil*, that I may receive rightly and understand

truly the words of eternal life, the rich and profound mysteries of thy kingdom. So shall I hear, and live, and learn, and love, till I see thee in thy glory; and then, stripped of all my own imperfection and frailty, be cloathed with thy righteousness and salvation, I shall magnify thy holy name in the great, the universal, the everlasting, Hallelujah.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

UPON DECLENSIONS FROM GOD.

ALAS! how prone I am to fall into sin, and to leave the fountain of living waters! My infirmities often prevail against me, and, contrary to the better will of my soul, drag me into the snares and bondage of corruption.

I have sinned: what shall I say unto thee, O thou preserver of men! If thou leave me to myself, if thou recover me not; I am gone for ever. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!

Thus I mourn and am vexed, when my corruptions are ready to over power me. I should be lost, but for thy merciful aid: I must perish entirely, if the blood and righteousness of my dear Redeemer were not again and again applied to save and to comfort me.

O what a miserable body do I bear about with me! It is the very load, and plague, and prison of my soul. And yet how foolishly do I love it, and care for it; and how much more time do I spend in nourishing this evil flesh, than in seeking the peace of God, or the advancement and prosperity of my immortal mind?—I am ashamed, as a Christian, that I am not more ashamed of these things.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

ON SOBRIETY OF SPIRIT.

A Christian should desire, as a great privilege, the constant sobriety and calm recollection of his mind.—Worldly things often flutter the animal spirits; and the disorder of these will too frequently throw the soul into confusion; so that it is liable to be carried away into what it condemns through the sudden liveliness of its affections, or to be turned aside from what it approves by the vehement onset of its passions. This want of inward sobriety is one great cause of all the irregularities, which believers feel and bemoan in their passage to heaven.

Be sober, be vigilant; is a most necessary admonition to us, while we are in this unstable flesh, and within reach of such an adversary as the devil. If we are not abstracted, in due measure, from the crazy and drunken spirit of this world, to which we are naturally inclined, and from which grace only can deliver us at all; we shall be distracted with a thousand foolish and useless things, be exposed to numberless dangers and snares, be harassed with doubts and disorders, and often in our giddiness shall forget where we are, whither we are going, and what must shortly pass upon us. O this golden, glittering, dazzling cup of the mystic Babylon, this evil world! How often is it in her hand, held out towards us! How ready are we to take and to drink of it! But how full is it of the abominations and filthiness of her spiritual fornication and departure from God!

How difficult, duly considered, is the Christian's passage through life! how marvellous his safe arrival in heaven! It appears indeed to be nothing less than one of the greatest wonders of Almighty goodness and power.

If a man were commanded to put to sea by himself in a small open boat, without any sustenance but what might fall from the skies, and with no direction but a chart and compass, and thus to pass over a wide and tempestuous ocean; it may give some faint idea of the Christian's voyage to heaven. He too in a feeble bark has no chart but the word of God, no compass but the Spirit of God, no provision but the daily grace of God in Christ, no safety from the raging waves of the world or the roaring winds of the evil spirit but the power of God, no ability to keep himself for one moment from sinking but through faith in the mercy of God, and no hope of getting safe to the heavenly shore but by the truth of God in Christ Jesus. Indeed, and indeed, when a Christian considers all these perils on the one hand, and his own weakness on the other; it seems an act of most astonishing love and omnipotence, that he should ever inherit the kingdom of heaven. He feels it to be mercy, and faithfulness, and rich bounty, and kindness altogether, from beginning to end, and is at times lost in wonder, love, praise, and gratitude, for so great and unmerited a salvation.

Seeing that these things are so, verily he ought to watch and pray, that he may continue in faith and charity, and in holiness with sobriety unto the end.

CHAPTER XL.

THE HEART MUST BE GIVEN TO GOD.

If we could offer to God the whole world, and yet keep back our heart; it would be to him a worthless and an odious offering. He considers not the greatness or outward grandeur of human works, but the spirit

by which they are performed. Some build hospitals, make noble endowments, give large donations, and do many other great and wonderful works; all which are not to be spoken against in themselves, because they are of use to the world and especially to the poor: But it is possible to do all these, without a heart for God, without considering his glory, without faith in his mercy, or love of mercy to man, and without being in the least degree nearer to him or his holiness. A widow with two poor mites and a hand and a heart of faith, will be found to have done more than all these, in the sight of him who judgeth righteously.

If our heart be given to God, we shall not be barren or unfruitful indeed; but our fruit will not be for carnal vanity, but unto true holiness. Christ in us the hope of glory, is a principle of such power, that it turns a man (as it were) out of himself, delivers him from his own selfish whims and intentions, releases him from a multitude of slavish fears and concerns, and causes him ardently to desire and delight in those things alone, which may exercise a gracious gratitude in showing forth the praises of his kind Redeemer.

CHAPTER XLI.

ON LIBERTY OF SOUL.

THE real liberty of the soul consists in a happy freedom from the absolute dominion of sin and Satan. The christian therefore denies himself, because of sin in his mortal body; he shuns the spirit of the world, because by its sinfulness its promotes his inbred corruptions; he prays and watches against the evil one, because he is the grand tempter and stirrer of all iniquity both in himself and others.

The more this frame is maintained, the more will the heart enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God. This is a holy and righteous freedom, which the christian pants after continually, and which is most sweetly experienced, when the soul is most abstracted from the low solicitudes and dull satisfactions of sense and time. The Father of mercies is the cause, the Son of his love is the means, and the Spirit of grace is the power, of all the spiritual freedom in earth and heaven, and of all the transporting blessedness resulting from it.

The world and the flesh are a dead weight upon the mind in its possession and exercise of this delightful liberty; and, therefore, in the mind's struggles to gain and secure it, the world and the flesh must be brought down and kept down, having, like the devil's jailers, nothing about them, but miserable chains and fetters, wherewith to blind and imprison the soul.

CHAPTER XLII.

UPON SICKNESS.

ALL sickness and sorrow arise from sin. If we were not unholy creatures, we could not be unhappy creatures. Because of the ill habit, occasioned by transgression, every element fights against our health by changes and inclemencies; and the very food we eat, while it nourishes for a time, lays the foundation of disease in our bodies, already prepared by their own weakness and ill temperament to receive and increase it.

Sickness is a dismal scourge to the ungodly, and a painful spur to the gracious. To the one, it is the harbinger of terror and misery; but, to the other, a solemn remembrancer indeed, both of the vanity of all earthly things, and of the nearer and nearer approach of immortal glory.

When sickness comes, and grace can meet it; O what a just representation do they make to the soul concerning the poor honors, riches, cares and pleasures, of this transitory world! How unimportant do all the struggles for power, splendor, titles, wealth, and pre-eminence, which have employed or enraged the past and present ages, appear! How childish and mean these objects pass before us, for which men have lavished their time, and thrown away their souls! What bubbles, what nonsense, what glaring and horrid stupidity, have filled and directed, have engaged and overwhelmed; the counsels of the world; and all to no other profit than a little fleeting vanity with a rapid descent to lasting oblivion or ruin! Thus the soul feels, when it is quickened by sickness to consider, the low and passing affairs of earth and time.

On the contrary, how inexpressibly great and tremendous do the things of God and eternity rise in full view to the mind! O the worth of worlds, what are they, in some of these soul searching moments! How is the mind astonished with the grandeur of God, and with the deep and wide importance of all that belongs to him! Rapt in the solemn contemplation of unutterable glories, how doth the mind tremblingly examine and carefully inquire into the truth and extent of its interest in them! And if grace seal an answer of peace upon the heart, how doth it flutter with gladness at its safety, and how will the whole frame be agitated with a new delight, in the sure prospect of an eternal concern in these valuable, these only valuable things.

The Christian will be wakingly alive to all this and more, if his disorder be such, as can admit of reflection. Blessed be God, however, whether he can thus reflect or not; yet, being a Christian, his state is equally safe with God through his gracious Redeemer. Whatever be the frame, the promise is sure, the covenant of God is ordered in all things and sure, and sure and faithful

is God himself to perform it. It is comfortable, and indeed desirable, to have pleasant foretastes and feelings of grace and glory, under the pain of decay of the body; but they are no otherwise material to the true believer's security for heaven. If he hath not these perceptions during the short time of his sickness, he will have them abundantly after it, if it ends in his dissolution; or if it do not thus end, the want of them is a loud admonition to make his calling and election sure, in the days that may yet be appointed him.

If we cannot think of Christ, through the power of disease, O what a happiness is it to be assured, that Christ thinks constantly and effectually of us! He makes all our bed in our sickness; that is, he turns the whole frame of our condition in it for our best advantage.

O Lord, leave me not, poor and helpless sinner that I am, in my most healthful state; leave me not especially, I beseech thee, in the low, the languid, the distressing circumstances of infirmity and disease! Jesus, Master, thou art said to have borne our sicknesses because thou barest the sins which occasioned them; take, take away from my conscience the guilt which brought disease, and then the worst part of its misery shall be done away too. And when, through my feebleness or disorder, I cannot act faith upon thy love; O catch my drooping spirit, carry me as one of thine own lambs in thy bosom, enfold me in thy gracious arms, and let my soul wholly commit itself and give up its all in quiet resignation to thee! If thou raise me from my sickness, grant that it may be for the setting forth of thy glory among men: If thou take me by sickness from this world, O thou hope and Life of my soul, receive me to thyself for my everlasting happiness, and to be another monument of sovereign grace before the great assembly of saints and angels in thy kingdom of heaven!

CHAPTER XLIII.

UPON DEATH.

It is an awful and a solemn thing to die; and I am sometimes amazed at myself, that, seeing it is not only awful but sure, I can be so void of reflection or recollection, as I frequently am concerning it.

Some talk bravely about death, and of encountering it with great natural courage, or upon high philosophical principles. These may indeed defy or meet the sting; but they can neither soften nor take it away. For a sinner to bully death with no spiritual life in his soul, and no everlasting life in reversion, is the act of a raving madman, who laughs at a horrible precipice before him, and rushes down headlong to destruction.

O eternity! eternity! It is fearful indeed to burst the bands of life and to break forth into the boundless and unalterable regions of eternity! Nature, in its senses, cannot bear the shocking reflection, which death affords, either of being an everlasting nothing as atheists talk, or of enduring everlasting misery as sin deserves. It is grace only, which can inspire the heart with a hope full of joy and immortality, that, when this brittle transitory life is past, the soul shall possess a being, happy and long as the days of heaven.

Through Jesus Christ alone is death disarmed. When the Savior speaks peace and salvation through his cross and righteousness, this last great enemy is no more the king of terrors. He gives up his fearful sting, and destroys nothing about the Christian, but sin and the means of sin.

O how sweet is the smile of that Christian, who, dying in the body, feels himself just upon living for ever! "He is not sick unto death, but unto life" indeed. He quits his cares, his sorrows, his infirmities, and all

that could distress or distract his spirit here, and looks calmly into the world before him, where he can meet with nothing but concord and joy, in the society of the redeemer and of his Savior throughout eternity. He is weaned from the earth, and therefore can part with it easily: He is fitted for heaven, and therefore longs for it earnestly. He cannot but desire that, which is congenial with his own renewed mind; and nothing of that sort can truly and perfectly be found out of the regions of glory.

They who afflict themselves (said a primitive christian writer) about the loss of this life, are like infants unborn, who, if they could speak, might bewail their expulsion from the womb at the approaching time of their birth; foolishly considering it, not as the means, but as the end of being. Men, in their natural state, may indeed deplore their removal from this world, for which only they desire to live; but the renewed Christian is privileged to have a more glorious hope of a life everlastingly pure, like God's, and of an habitation wide and beautiful as the temple of heaven.

Lord, when I should quit this clay, I know not, nor do I desire to know. It will be sufficient for me, if thou sustain me by thy grace now, and if I am divinely assured, that I shall be for ever with thee in the world to come. O that this invincible joy of the Lord may indeed be my strength, when I lay down upon the bed of death, waiting from moment to moment for Christ, and for my own dismission hence to be with him!

Soon this body shall return to the dust, from whence it was framed; but nothing can extinguish the life of my spirit, which hath no relation to earth, which cannot subsist by matter and form, and which, in all its faculties of will, understanding, love, and preception, is of a kin to a brighter world. And, O how reviving is the thought! I am not only of kin to angels and heavenly spirits by the very nature of my soul; but I

am doubly related to them and to my God, by being born again and renewed after his blessed image, or likeness, through Christ Jesus. I am made by this, a child and an heir of an everlasting inheritance. All that death, then, can do to me is, to tell me that I am of age, and to lead me forth from these chambers of darkness to celebrate my birth day in the palace of glory. There is in this view (what hath often been tasted) a kind of luxury in dying. In such a blessed, such an animating sense of death, I ought to say, that he deserves quite another name; or, rather, to exult with the prophet and apostle, " O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Whence then, at times, is the shuddering reluctance I feel at the prospect of dying? Surely it is, because my faith and hope are not so lively as they are privileged to be; it is because I do not so steadily trust in the truth of those things, which my mind apprehends, and which I profess to be waiting for. Earth is too real, and heaven too unreal; or I could not thus hesitate, or tremblingly stand, on the bank of the brook which keeps me from the fruition of God. The struggle of my heart would not be for longer and longer continuance here, if my spirit were as firmly persuaded, as it should be, of my inheritance and mansion in glory.

Thou blessed Savior of poor sinners like me, on thee, and on thee alone, my eyes are fixed! In the solemn last hour of my pilgrimage below, O let my eyes of faith be yet more steadily, and more ardently fixed upon thee! And do thou, in the tender compassion of thy heart, which can sympathize with all thy people's woes, look down in my departing moments upon me. Soothe the pangs of death with thy rich consolation and care. Let me then see thee by precious faith, who to carnal sense art invisible; ready, willing, glad to receive my soul; and let me pour it forth, in an exstacy of praise and desire, as into the bosom of everlasting love! O

my God, thus to die, would not be dying; but only departing to live and to be happy for ever!

So true are thy gracious words, O my Jesus, that "Whosoever liveth, and believeth in thee, shall never die: No, he shall never perish, but is passed from death unto life, and shall live for evermore." Glory be to thee for this rich, this invaluable promise! Lord, I believe: O help mine unbelief!

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE RECOLLECTION OF THIS SECOND PART IN PRAYER TO GOD.

ENABLE me, O Lord my God, to examine myself, the state of my soul, and the reality and growth of my experience, seriously, deeply, and constantly. I am still clothed with a corrupt nature, and therefore am always inclined to favor myself; and nothing but thy grace can give me a faithful distrust of my own condition and attainments, or an holy watchfulness over all that passeth within me.

As I have received Christ Jesus my Lord; so, I know, it is my interest, privilege, happiness, and duty, to walk, to live, to grow, and to press forward in him. O keep me from spiritual sloth, or, as it may better be called, from carnal security, that I may run with the loins of my mind always girt and disentangled, and with increasing faith and patience, the blessed race which thou hast set before me. Give zeal for every duty, wisdom and strength rightly to perform it, and a humble holy resignation of heart to leave all the success unto thee.

Make me wise to discern the motions within my soul,

and to trace out from whence they proceed. O Let me not be deceived by the will, or the cunning force of the flesh, whenever it would mingle in holy things: But let my spirit be thine own sacred temple, where I may find thee indeed, working in me, enlightening and enlivening me for all thy service and glory, and drawing me, with a single eye, and a simple heart, to seek not myself, nor my own pride, profit, or pleasure, but all I want, and all I can rightly have, in thee, and in thee alone. Draw me nearer and nearer to this just and perfect rule of action, to this sweet and blessed spiritual life; so that I may be able indeed to say, and with the increasing confidence of truth, I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me; and the life, that I live in the flesh, is not after the flesh, but by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself freely for me. O let this be my humble and secret path of life, which none can know but whom thou teachest, and which, for its narrowness, none can walk in but whom thou supportest by thy hand.

Thou knowest, O my God, that I am in the world, surrounded by temptations, opposed by men, attacked by devils, weakened by infirmities, and exposed by a corrupt nature to all manner of evils. Without are fightings, within are fears. How shall I get safely on to the end, or, rather, how shall I get on at all, unless thou art with me! I plead then thine own promise of truth, that thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and at last receive me to glory.

Keep me, while I am in the world, from the envious, proud, hateful, dangerous, and unhappy spirit, which aboundeth in it. Let me have constant proof that indeed I am thine, by having thy life manifest in my mortal body, controlling and subduing it in all things to thy righteous will. So shall even the world own, that I have been with Jesus; and if it hate me, upon that account, as it hated him, O welcome be it, and let

me account it as one of my brightest evidences and greatest honors.

In all the circumstances and conditions of my outward life, O help me to look for thy special blessing, without which nothing can succeed in itself, without which every thing may lead me astray. Help me to bear losses and crosses, as thy dispensations intended only for my good; and give me wisdom and grace to see thine intention, and to get the good thou meanest by them. Restrain all the murmuring and rebellion of my carnal nature against thy holy will, and lead my spirit, by all visitations, to nearer fellowship and sweeter communion with thee. So shall my earthly sorrows be turned into spiritual joys, and all the calamities, which can befall me here, shall become urging and successful remembrancers to prepare me for my mansion in thy heavenly kingdom.

And when sickness and death shall come, as come they must in a very little while at the longest, O stand by me, my dear and only Lord, in my drooping and needful moments. Make all my bed in my sickness, and overcome the sorrows of nature by the lively joys of thy grace. Receive my spirit, which I commit unto thee, as thine only; for truly I am thine entirely, thine by purchase, thine by grace, thine by promise, thine by the immutable oath of all thine holy attributes. O carry me to the regions of peace, to the church of the first born, to the city of God, and to Jesus my Lord, my Life, and my only Redeemer! Whom have I in heaven itself but thee; and what can I desire, throughout all thy works, in comparison of thee! My heart and my flesh may fail; but thou, thou, even thou, art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever!

THE CHRISTIAN REMEMRBANCER.

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

THE REAL CHRISTIAN LOVES HIS COUNTRY, AND IS THEREFORE THE BEST OF PATRIOTS.

POLITICAL hypocrisy hath made the laudable name of patriotism almost suspicious. But he, that is sincere in the best things and walks as in the sight of God, will, of all men, be faithful in lower matters, and carry a sterling integrity from religion into every duty of social life. On the other hand, he, that regards not God, nor yet other men but as they are convenient to himself, may very justly be suspected in his fidelity to his country. Profit and vain glory, indeed, will carry some men very far, as they have done; but strip a worldly man of these, and where are his motives for promoting the national welfare?

The Christian is not a mere showy patriot, for lucre or for fame; but he is, what none but a Christian can be, a patriot in spirit and in truth, pouring out his secret and earnest prayers before God for the true prosperity of the land. The world, indeed, hath a low opinion of this artillery of heaven; but one, who is wiser than the world, hath told us, that the effectual

fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. And if one such person, like an Elias, can be instrumental in drawing down public blessings; what may not be hoped for from the prayers of legions of Christians throughout the nation? We may read what the prayers of such men have done, in Heb. xi. 33. 34.

The Christian patriot will rejoice in all the good done to his country; though other hands rather than his have been employed in the doing it. That man deserves not the name of a patriot, to whom the peace honor, and prosperity of his country are valuable, only as they may contribute to his own.

As the Christian's patriotism is founded upon the pure principles of religion, he is more desirous of his country's prosperity in true worth and virtue than in mere power and riches, which are often the dangerous fuel of luxury and pride both to states and individuals. He is no enemy to commerce, for a thousand reasons, but an utter enemy to commercial vices, for reasons infinite and eternal.

In wishing for his country all kinds of temporal blessings, he cannot forget to ask before God for a greater abundance of spiritual mercies. His heart's desire is, that the gospel and religion of Jesus Christ, happily countenanced and established by the laws, may for ever flourish through the land in all its genuine power and purity. Though he is not, and cannot be an enemy to any man, yet he is a well principled adversary to all wicked and blasphemous errors and opinions, and to all profligacies of heart and life, which flow from them, and which have overrun the country with guilt and shame.

The Christian carries religion into his patriotism, but not his patriotism into religion. The things of God are too holy and sacred with him, either to be mixed with or truckle to the little low politics of men. He is the citizen of a better country, and a pilgrim in

all others, though a peculiar friend to that in which he was born.

As he can say with Samuel, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for this nation; so he would act upon all occasions, as Samuel did, and endeavor to promote the welfare of his country by being a good countryman. He will contribute fairly and cheerfully to her burdens, live in all godly quietness and honesty among his people, and pray faithfully and earnestly for the whole public weal as a Christian. Were all the subjects such patriots, the nation, with God's blessing, would have but small reason to live in fear of the most mighty and numerous enemies.

CHAPTER II.

THE REAL CHRISTIAN IS CONSCIENTIOUSLY A DUTIFUL SUBJECT TO THE KING AND HIS GOVERNMENT.

He that said, fear God, immediately added, as one evident proof of the reality of his godly fear, honor the king. Being chief magistrate, the king is God's first temporal minister, who is to bear the sword of justice and judgment, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. The Christian then, living like a Christian, has no just cause to fear a wound. We are commanded by God to reverence those who act under the king for these ends; how much more then are we bound to regard himself? And if the Christian be concerned for his country, he cannot be unconcerned for his sovereign, who is more deeply interested in its welfare than any other man.

He prays publicly and privately for his king, for his family, and for all that are put in authority under him. It is his wisdom, interest, principle, and duty, thus to pray; because their prosperity is not only connected with his own, but their downfal would occasion the worst of hazard both to his country and his friends. He who countenances strife and sedition, can no more be a true and benevolent Christian, than a real patriot and subject; for by these, confusion, rebellion, rapine, and murder, may overspread a land, to the destruction of millions, and to the reproachful hindrance of all godliness and piety. I can find examples of pardon for the most atrocious private sins in the bible; but I do not recollect one instance of God's mercy extended to the public crime of rebellion. Possibly the reason is, because, as in an aggregate, it involves and induces every other wickedness, and is precisely that offence, which first ruined the fallen angels, and through them brought all misery and mischief into this present world, as well as occasioned the irreparable sorrows of eternity.

A true Christian values private, public, and religious peace at too high a rate, ever to sacrifice it to the caprices and suspicions of selfish parties and worldly politicians. Corrupt as the world now is, he is thankful for the civil and religious liberty he enjoys, esteeming it a wonderful providence to him as a Briton above almost all other men; and therefore he is not captious and querulous that governors are frail mortals, like himself, and so cannot possibly please every one, nor be absolutely perfect in all things.

In cases of real oppression, the Christian hath a better God to go to, than his own passions, or the violences of sinful men, or the evil god of this evil world, who kindles those passions and violences by his own. He doth not rave, but pray; not swear and curse, but bless; not strive to cut throats for his own self-will,

but to subdue his own heart first to the will of God, and to soften the hearts of others by temperance of conduct, kindness of reason, and purity of life. "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts."

The word of God is the Christian's rule of politics; not the false, fanciful, ignorant, and impracticable speculations of men, who knew not their own hearts, and who, deriving all from their own stock, could not have true wisdom or grace, and consequently could not truly and really govern themselves. Whatever principles, temper, and conduct, cannot be sanctified by the word of God and prayer, are absolutely unholy to a Christian, and strictly to be avoided.

CHAPTER III.

THE REAL CHRISTIAN WILL PUNCTUALLY OBEY THE LAWS OF HIS COUNTRY IN EVERY THING, NOT OPPOSITE TO THE WILL AND WORD OF GOD.

INIQUITY, not righteousness, is the object and occasion of law. Without law, so sinful is man, there could be no society, property, liberty, or peace. And though real Christians would, as such, do nothing but right, were there no law at all; yet as the number of these is few, and as the nature of man is frail, and requires order and direction, they cannot better show, that they could live without laws, than by the most exact attention never to break them.

There is only one case in which a Christian can withdraw his obedience; namely, when the laws of men are directly opposite to the will, and word, and laws of God. But he ought to be very sure that they are so, and should not trust to his own single judgment; lest, instead of suffering for God by resisting man, he only set up his natural self-will against that of others, and so disgrace rather than glorify the cause of goodness and truth.

The laws of his country ought to be very dear, at this time, to a British Christian; and also to an American, because he is most unreservedly protected by them, in his liberty, property, and religion. He can now sit and kneel too, under his own vine, none making him afraid.

A professor in religion acts unworthily, when he strives to evade the spirit and intention of the laws, or to profit by secretly breaking them. It is no act of faith either to smuggle, or to eat, drink, and wear such things as the prudence of the state hath forbidden. Persons who can allow themselves in this licentiousness, ought to examine the uprightness and sincerity of their own consciences, and whether they would not yet further contribute to the ruin and confusion of their country, if the punishment and force meant for ungodly men did not restrain even them. The christianity of a smuggler, or shuffler of just duties and taxes, is as much to be doubted, as the honor and justice of a professed highwayman. It may be added, that the man deserves the highest blame, who, professing religion, can do what both religion and reason uniformly condemn. By his profession he renders himself both a cheat and a hypocrite; whereas, without it, he would have proved himself only a knave. These are hard and bad names; but they cannot be so bad or offensive to us, as the persons, whom they describe, most certainly are to HIM, who hateth iniquity.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW A REAL CHRISTIAN SHOULD CONDUCT HIMSELF TOWARDS THE CHURCH OF GOD.

THE untamed corruptions and natural blindness of the human heart have introduced a great variety of disorders into Christian profession, and occasioned the whole multitude of sects and parties. All believers agree, that there is but one spiritual church, the bride of Christ and the mother of the faithful; but all believers do not act as if they really consented to this truth. What mischiefs hath not the carnal mind produced in all ages! Superstition, bigotry, persecution, pomp, parade, and intolerance, are all of them the proper fruits of an evil heart, uncircumcised, unsubdued, untaught, by the Spirit and power of God. They are the evil and detestable weeds in the spiritual field, which do nothing but stifle, overrun, rob, and impoverish the corn.

There are real Christians perhaps in every Christian church or society; and it will scarce be denied, that there are hypocrites, formalists, carnalists, and ungodly men, in all. Let the Christian's conscience be free; for God is his only master in these things; but to whatever particular profession he may belong, let his conversation be edifying to that, and let his charity be shown to all the rest He should be willing to think the best things of any good men, considering the prejudices of education, the differences of situation and temper, and the advantages which God hath given to some above others; and especially considering, that real Christians of all denominations are sincere in their views, and under deep concern for the salvation of their souls. These considerations beget tenderness

There is only one c… withdraw his obedien… men are directly opp… laws of God. But … are so, and shoul… ment; lest, inste… man, he only s… of others, and … of goodness …

The law … this time, … rican, b… them, i… now s… him … str… to … f…

…nt of this tender… …he is not yet carnal. …ould be unity, in things …all things charity." …the outward mode or form …g their worship of God, their …are one and the same. As be… …the like grace of faith with those …though there was a vast disparity in …ensations, so these last have an in… …tial unity, yea, and uniformity too, … Let each then, in his several vo… …much strive for the honor of a party, the …being only the love of self; but to glo… …with all the gracious power which may be … It would be happy indeed for themselves, …able for the Christian religion, if all its pro… …were like-minded in all outward things; but as …is not to be expected, while evil can mingle with …or darkness with light, they ought however to …hard, on all sides, to keep the "unity of the …Spirit in the bond of peace."

Let him that useth ceremonies, be candid to him that useth them not; and let him that will not observe times, and days, and rituals, pray for, rather than revile, those who do. The love of Christ preaches this lesson, which the apostle of Christ, almost in so many words, enforces and confirms.

With respect to those of the same denomination, the Christian is called in a more especial manner, to show forth his works of faith, and labors of love, for their comfort and edification. He will see that the true distinction of a believer in Jesus, is not to rise over all and to set up himself as a great somebody, but to be the servant of all, showing all meekness, patience, gentleness, and truth. The infirmities of others he must not magnify, but pity and pray over, knowing that he him-

the flesh. The attainments of others he y, because these are the free gift of God, man can allow himself to envy, it is only he doth not know this gift aright. Strength it inspires another conduct: weakness of the alone submits to this. In fine, whether he be a blic servant or a private member in the visible church, he will pray that he may demean himself according to the settled order, with all gravity and decency, that he may lay no stumbling block in the way of the weak, and no offence before the eyes of the strong; but that he may be an example of godliness, humility, faith, resignation, and charity, to all about him.

This, surely, is far better than any nickname; for this is the true life and essence of the best name—a *Christian.*

CHAPTER V.

ON THE RECIPROCAL DUTIES OF MINISTERS AND PEOPLE.

It would be presumption in me to offer to teach those, by whom I would most gladly be taught. My words, therefore, on this head, shall be few; and I trust they will not offend.

The faithful minister is the servant, the shepherd, or pastor, the overseer, the teacher, the guide, the physician, the helper, and the comforter of the people committed to his charge. It is not, consequently, a light business for light heads; but an awful and solemn concern, which reqnires all the grace, wisdom, prudence, learning, courage, faith, patience, and holiness,

that are dispersed among the laity at large, to be collected in one assemblage for one man.

The profit of the flock, not the profit from the flock, is the grand object of a true pastor's concern. It is the character of the hireling, whose own the sheep are not, to care only for the fleece; and when he gets this, the sheep not being his, (which he proves by his want of care for their souls,) he is nothing better than a robber. The world swarms with these spiritual thieves, who sacrifice all the plunder to their idleness, avarice, pride, or pleasures.

What a character doth the Lord give of whom he calls the foolish shepherd? He doth not "visit those that are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal the broken, nor feed that which standeth still. Wo (continues he) to the idol (the false or foolish) shepherd, that leaveth the flock; the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye; his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened." He shall be without strength or understanding. Zech. xi. 16. See also Ezek. xxxiv.

When any congregation of people have the blessing of an able and faithful minister, how ought they to prize so scarce and valuable a jewel! Such an one is worthy of all honor, both for his work's sake and for his own sake; and those Christians are not wise for themselves, who do not all in their power to strengthen his hands, and to assist him in his ministry.

One good way of accomplishing this, is to pray earnestly and constantly in private for the pastor. This would draw down mutual blessings both on speaker and hearers, and much endear them to each others. The reason, probably, of the dissatisfaction and uselessness, which often arise between them, may be owing to the want of mutual prayer, which begets indifference or remissness, as well as discovers too lax a spirit of watchfulness and faith. And, then, how can the word, on

one side, profit; and on the other, how can the preacher be approved?

The minister of Christ, who gives up all his time, labor, and expectations to his holy calling, ought to be comfortably and honorably supported in it. The laborer is worthy of his hire; and the very beasts eat of the corn for which they toil. If the maintenance be voluntary, it ought to be the more liberal for that very reason; if it be settled, it ought to be punctually complied with. It is sad for ministers, whose business is of a higher kind, that the covetousness or dishonesty of their people should make it just and necessary for them to attend, with any anxiety, to lower affairs. Certainly, it betrays a want of love to God, when men can suffer his ministers or his poor to starve by their dwellings. How can the pastor give himself up to the word and to prayer, when he is constrained to serve tables? And how can he minister without distraction, when poverty and care haunt and worry him all the day long? As a layman, I may ask these questions, without suspicion of any interested attachment to an order.

It is a melancholy fact, that the worldly pride and laziness of some clergymen, have made the laity regardless of their profession, and ready to treat it with wrongs; and that the spiritual ignorance and the irreligion of the laity have rendered the profession of the clergy, in all respects, not so honorable or desirable, as it should be, for themselves.

However these things may be, the Christian hath one security of hope, which can never fail; the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: "the Lord knoweth them that are his;" and, "let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity." God is our refuge and strength; we have found him abundantly so in trouble; therefore, will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. There is a

river, the streams whereof shall make glad the *city* of *God.*

Outward embellishments may vary and fail; but the true temple of God shall endure for ever. Yet while Providence has ordained these outward establishments, it seems the business and privilege of grace cheerfully to observe and support them.

CHAPTER VI.

ON QUARRELS AMONG CHRISTIANS.

It is not grace which genders strife, but corruption. If therefore my brother's corruption be raised against me, shall I oppose my corruption to his, and so enter into wrath; or shall I not rather beg of God, that his grace in me may invite the grace that is in my brother, and so we may settle the whole in peace? If we are real christians, we must both desire only what is just and right, or we do not live like Christians; and if we both agree in desiring this as the end, how is it that we differ violently about the means? If either have done or desired the wrong, the other, who is more under the conduct of grace, should kindly and affectionately represent it; and, if he cannot be heard, should leave the matter to God, without raising the unholy and unhappy tumult of heat and resentment in his own mind. He that can bear and forbear most, is certainly most the Christian. It is misery and deadness to a real believer to walk and to war after the base fury and discord of the flesh. When he deserves well, and patiently suffers evil, then he is like to his Master, and right in himself.

The apostle directs for believers, not the vengeance of the law, but Christian arbitration. Law is the last refuge, and can only be lawful, when right is not to be had by better means.

If Christians, who have a matter of difference, would graciously agree to meet with each other in prayer, and to pray together kindly for each other before the throne of grace; surely, if they meant the attainment of that right and truth which they prayed for, they might soon find it out and settle it accordingly. But it is the flesh which comes in and mars all. One cannot stoop; and the other will not. They are not so wise as Luther's two goats, that met upon a narrow plank over a deep water. They could not go back, and they dared not to fight. At length one of them lay down, while the other went over him; and so peace and safety attended both. Why should not believers try this method? But, alas! while grace remains idle or neuter; the world jeers and triumphs; the devil is busy and excites; good men mourn and lament; the weak are stumbled and turned aside; and a long train of inquietudes and jealousies fill the breasts of those, who humbly hope to dwell with God, and with each other throughout eternity. These things ought not to be.

If my brother be wrong, how shall I show myself in the right? By wounding him more than he hath wounded himself? By doing wrong likewise, and rendering evil for evil? No; let me pray, that God would open his eyes, and not shut my heart; that he would give him more grace, and me more patience to meet what is not gracious in him; and, at the utmost, that I may not be a partaker with him of anger, or of those sins which may follow upon it.

Am I in the wrong? What then shall I do? Shall I persist in it, and make myself more in the wrong? This would not be gracious; this would be bringing

misery by heaps upon myself. Rather let me go first to God, and then to my brother, acknowledging my fault, or my error, to both. There is no shame in confessing our sins to God, nor any meanness in owning them to men. It is the mark of a noble and generous spirit in common life; and it is the wisdom, as well as the duty and privilege, of a much better life in the Christian.

O thou love of the brethren, whither art thou fled! We profess to believe in the communion of saints; but where are the saints, who have this communion? We talk of the unity of God's church with respect to its members; but where are those members, who live in this unity? O shame upon us, that we differ at all, that we differ on trifles, that we love to differ, that we urge and promote differences, and that the healing spirit is not more to be found among us? Lord, if thou wouldst differ with us at any time, as we are ready at all times to differ with others; O how should we stand before thee, or what could we answer for ourselves! Give, O give more of thy grace, that we may be humble in our own hearts, true and just in our desires, mild to others, and deeply submissive to thee!

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE MARRIAGES OF REAL CHRISTIANS, AND THEIR DUTIES IN THAT STATE.

It is the voice of reason and religion, that piety must not be yoked with profaneness, nor the true believer with an infidel. When persons have broken through this rule, they have always done it to their own sad cost; as abundance of examples can testify.

Some have ventured upon this transgression, from mere carnal motives, pretending at least to hope, that they might be instruments of bringing the other side unto God. Many instances indeed occur, where both parties have married before they knew the grace of God, and have afterwards been called by it; but the example, perhaps, is not to be found, where a believer, acting directly against the rule of God for temporal ends, hath been blessed with the spiritual advantage of a partner's conversion, but on the contrary, hath been vexed with trouble and mortification to the end of life. It may be expected, that God will be faithful to his own words and that they, who wilfully violate his order, cannot do it with his blessing.

This blessing of God is all in all; and if we have not this, whatever we have beside, it is nothing, or worse than nothing.

When the marriage contract is made graciously, and with grace; there is every reason to hope for success. The less water of earth, and the more wine of heaven, there is at the feast, so much the better.

After marriage, begins a life of care; and consequently the life of faith should be strengthened to bear it. It is a good way for married persons, not only to pray in the family, or privately, but together. Mutual prayers will improve mutual affections, and turn the very commonest blessings of life into spiritual mercies. If Christ dwell indeed in both their hearts, he will not only keep out disgust and variance, but subdue or remove the causes of them.

As this state requires much and strong grace to go through it properly towards God; so it demands a larger exercise of charity, forbearance and kindness, than any other, that no duty fail between the first and dearest of neighbors, the husband and wife. These are more exposed to solicitude, trouble, and a thousand affecting circumstances, than persons in the sin-

gle state: they are yoked inseparably to meet them, and inseparably must bear them. Now, if grace be not the living and conquering principles in two persons thus circumstanced; there are so many imperfections in themselves, so many unavoidable mortifications from others, and so many evils on every side, that it will be impossible for them to live, in a due degree as they ought, above the common disquietudes, which overwhelm the world. But grace in the heart will double every temporal mercy, soften every temporal misery, and lead them on, with united hands, towards the kingdom of heaven.

What a comfort is it to true Christians, truly married in grace as well as nature, to reflect, that, as they are helpers of each other's faith and joy in this world, so they shall be everlasting friends, in a more exalted way of life, in the kingdom of God? They can remain together in this state for only a very few years at the most; but there, no further separation shall ensue. Being as the angels of God, they shall live with him and the whole church of the redeemed in unspeakable joy for ever. Their present union of heart and grace faintly typifies the union of themselves and of all the faithful with Christ; and, when they part here, they do not separate in the best sense, but only pass off, one perhaps after the other, to enjoy this union in everlasting perfection.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE DUTY OF PARENTS.

THE general rule of parental duty is, to bring up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It is true, we cannot give them grace, but we can lead them to the means of grace. We cannot give them a new life, but we can correct the old one. We cannot make them to know Christ savingly; but we can, and we ought to nurture them diligently in the ways of Christ, and admonish them in the fear of God. Whatever we can do for them, either temporally or spiritually, we are bound to do; and when we have done all, we must leave them to the Lord. We must not repine if we cannot mend their outward circumstances; for these are in God's disposal. Nor should we faithlessly murmur, if all our prayers and diligence be lost for their spiritual good; for, as this is a gracious gift, we only seem to attribute too much to our own power and affections, when we unduly lament, that our children have not obtained it by us. When we have prayed to God for them, we must trust God with them, and wait the issue in faith and patience. Nature will keep up our common endeavors, and grace will promote a thousand and a thousand prayers. These, when put together, will make up a good stock and foundation, and consequently no bad inheritance for them.

There is a promise of blessing to more than "the third and fourth generation" of a Christian's offspring; which love for them, and faith in the promiser, will ever be prompting him to sue out, that they may obtain. I had rather be a good man's child covered by his prayers, than the son of the first emperor in the world, undevoted and unblest.

Some that never had children, and others that would be wiser than Solomon, or rather than God's word itself, have written books to show, that chastisements should be utterly excluded from education. Doubtless, it requires prudence and temper to chastise properly, and ought to be done with a secret looking to God for a blessing, as well as on any other duty; but those have either taken up false principles of human nature, or have had but very little experience of it, who presume that it will do very well without the fear of punishment, or that it can be reasoned into all the irksome duties and toils of life. Such methods, we know, will not restrain, even grown persons, who certainly can reason, and receive reason, better than children. Corruption is to be checked by all means; and if the gentler kinds fail of effect, as they will in the far greater part of instances, the more severe must be used, but always without passion, and in moderation. It should be understood to be a parent's sad duty, which therefore can give him no pleasure, but on the contrary pain and mortification. When it is thus performed, it will not easily be abused: when otherwise, it is not really performed at all. The parent's ill conduct deserves a severer chastisement from God, than any that can be due to the misdemeanor of a child.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE DUTY OF CHILDREN.

THESE are to obey their parents in the Lord, for this is right. Till children have learned obedience, they have properly learned nothing, and will probably be fit for nothing.

As they owe to their parents, under God, their maintenance, protection, introduction to the duties of life, and their very life itself; God hath laid it upon them, as what is necessary in the order of his providence, to honor and respect their parents. Children who transgress this order, rebel against God. And it hath been matter of great concern to many gracious persons, after they have been brought to a true sense of things, that they have failed particularly in this just and important duty.

Their obedience is to be in the Lord, and for the Lord's sake. This is well pleasing to God, and profitable for themselves. The only exemption is, if parents are so ungracious and unjust, as to insist upon any thing which God forbids, or to oppose any thing which God commands. Here the most dutiful children must disobey, and can plead God's own absolution.

There is one great circumstance in life, which often strains the bond of filial duty. This is marriage. Children ought, if possible, to engage in this state with the full blessing and consent of their parents. On the other hand, parents should never constrain, and not always restrain, the affections of their children.

The two trying cases are fortune and religion.

As to the former, the discretion of parents is usually of great importance. Children are not to follow their passions into ruin; nor is it the duty of their parents to consent to it. On the other hand, mere lucre should not guide the parent's eye or mind, but the nobler considerations of character, worth, and piety. Where these are wanting, all the wealth in the world is nothing but a gilded curse.

As to religion, the unalterable rule for Christians is, to marry in the Lord. If a parent direct otherwise, the command of God must first be regarded; and though he may have a right to put a negative perhaps

upon almost any match, he cannot have a right to command one, which is contrary to the express word of God. He likewise hath not a right to sacrifice his child's natural affections in any marriage, even where no objection can be made upon a religious account; because the peace and comfort of natural life are concerned, and because the child must be the sufferer here, and be exposed to some dangerous temptations. On the other hand, (to put the last difficult case) where the child hath placed affections in a manner, that religion and all other circumstances will justify, but, because of religion, the parent withholds consent; it will be best to try all means to gain that consent, to wait as long as possible and with as much patience as possible for it; above all, to supplicate the Father of mercies to dispose the hearts of the parties concerned aright, and not at last to venture on an act of such apparent disobedience, but for fear of greater evils than what may arise from the unreasonable obstinacy, perverseness, or irreligion of the parent. The case is so nice, and may so vary in its circumstances, that the wisdom, uprightness, grace, and impartiality of the ablest Christian friends should be well consulted upon the occasion.

CHAPTER X.

ON THE DUTY OF CHRISTIAN MASTERS.

It is far more difficult rightly to command, than dutifully to obey. To be a master and a Christian at the same time, in the direction of worldly affairs, requires more grace than men usually imagine. The master may soon be acted, and the people are com-

monly very fond of acting this, from the lust of power which rages in corrupted nature; but to command under a sense of God's authority, the things which are just and equal, and not to be lifted up with the pride and passion of pre-eminence, this is to give a proof, that the heart indeed lives as in God's presence, and that worldly superiority, which generally begets insolence, can be maintained with true meekness and humility. But how can he, whom grace hath not made master of his own corruptions, expect obedience from others with all readiness and sincerity?

As in a higher case, so in this it may be asked of every Christian master, who maketh thee to differ from another? Surely, God's providence never raised men into power, that they might show their pride only, but to do good, and to carry on, as far as their power may extend, the welfare of society. If any people act otherwise, they must one day be deeply convinced, that all the little distinctions of men have no natural reality in them, and that there is one common Master in heaven, with whom there is no such thing as respect of persons.

Many professing masters are exceedingly deficient in one great duty to their servants. They give them perhaps plenty of bread, and furnish them well in earthly things; but they neglect to hold out the best of all subsistence, the bread of life to their souls. The omission of family worship cannot be excused on any account. This (as one said) like the hem to a garment, keeps all things together, and prevents other duties and affairs from ravelling out. Servants cannot have grace indeed but by God's mercy; but they can easily see, if their masters do not live graciously, and will readily notice it too; nay, sometimes make from their failures an apology, though a bad apology for themselves. If masters would live and demean themselves like Christians indeed, and walk in the

fear of God, their servants would mend their manners, if not their hearts, and we should have fewer complaints than we have, to the disgrace of religion and the discomfort of our lives.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE DUTY OF CHRISTIAN SERVANTS.

A PROFESSING servant should get by heart the following rule of the Apostle, and in all his business keep it in mind: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ: Not with eye-service, as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men."

Our proud hearts do not naturally love obedience. We would all be masters, and set up for ourselves; and if God suffereth this, corrupt as we now are, we should all soon be undone.

Is the master a man of the world? The Christian servant's light should so shine before him, that, though he may hate him for his religion, he may respect him for his diligence, dutifulness, uprightness, and truth. Some masters have been won to God by the gracious and upright conduct and conversation of their servants; and how do those servants live, who say, that they shall not be so blessed? If the master be harsh, it is not likely that a servant's sauciness should reclaim his mind, or do good to himself, or bring honor to the cause of God. Let all be done, which can be done,

without murmurings and disputings; and, if there be no other remedy, it is better to part than to commit the sins of impertinence, or to live in the sins of anger and of strife.

Is the master a real Christian? The faithful servant will render him double honor, and rejoice to obey him on a double account; both because Providence hath made such an one his master, and grace his brother and friend. If he take any unhandsome liberties on that account, forgetting his own place and duty, he breaks the order and disposal of God, and lays for his own mind a foundation of much uneasiness. It is a sad mistake of their duty, when truly serious servants imagine, that by the grace of God they are to take up a new sort of natural boldness, and that, instead of putting on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, they have from grace a privilege to be insolent, froward, rough, and disobedient. What a wretched thing is it to be said in the world, as it too often is, I had rather have any kind of servants, than professors of religion, because they are always lazy or unruly: Or, "I had rather have any one for my master or mistress, than those who talk about godliness; they are always so gloomy, humorsome, and perverse: In their places of worship they seem saints; but at home they are wolves, and bears, and very devils." O this is a sad light indeed before men; or rather an unshining taper, that reeks only in a smoke and a stink!

The laws of this country, above all others, are so much in favor of servants and the poor, that the Christian servant is obliged, in gratitude both to God and man, to conduct himself with the more zeal in his service to both. Servants here are considered by the laws as equally free in person with their masters, and are not to be defrauded or abused. How then should the Christian bless God, that he hath placed him in such a country as this, where the gospel is freely

preached and freely heard, and where he can enjoy his conscience with comfort and liberty? If he hath more work than his master, (though that is not always the case,) he hath less care, fewer distractions, and is more out of the way of many deceitful and dangerous temptations.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY IN HIS CALLING.

In the conduct of all things, whether spiritual or temporal, a Christian is called, not unto uncleanness, but unto holiness, and to be blameless and harmless, the son of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. The methods and practices of evil men are to be no rule with him; but his outward life and conduct should be a luminous example unto them. He should remember, that though they cannot see or know his inward life or principle of action, yet they are very able judges of the action itself, and can easily discern whether his temper, honesty, sincerity, goodness, and charity, be such as become his profession.

The Christian's station, therefore, in this life, should be maintained for his Master's glory; for that is his chief business, not only in the church, but in the shop, the field, the house, the closet, and in all he hath and doth in the world; for which end, grace must come into and superintend the whole. Be he rich or poor, high or low, if he live without grace in common life, he lives poorly to God, if at all, in spirituals, and (to say the best) at a very cold and uncomfortable rate

within himself. For a Christian to think of getting satisfaction or happiness out of the creatures without God's blessing, argues a great want of faith and experience; and he cannot have this blessing, unless he carry grace with him into his circumstances, and subject his own will, his vocation, his industry, and all his carnal affairs and affections to God's glory.

A Christian is as much a man of grace at the market or in the shop, as in the church or the closet. He deals fairly and conscientiously, neither defrauding in the nature, measure, or weight, of commodities, nor taking base advantages of the ignorance of others. The money, gotten by fraud, hath a curse, that will either bring torment with it, or melt itself away. There is a maxim, "buy cheap, and sell dear:" and to carry this maxim on, men will wrongly undervalue and discommend, saying, it is naught, naught, in order to defraud the seller of the just worth; and they will over-prize, and put into a false light by a thousand false words, what they have to part with, merely to take in the buyer. Thus shop-lies, as well as custom-house oaths, are become proverbial, and therefore trivial, even with some who should treat all such abominable practices with detestation. But how can he be thought an upright man with God or in the church, who can pick another's pocket by words, which he knows to be deceitful and unjust, in the poor concerns of this world?

The putting double prices upon goods is also dishonorable, and unworthy of a Christian. If a man give the higher price for that which the seller can and will afford at the lower, the seller is a thief and a cheat, for all the money in the difference. The law of man indeed will not lay hold of him; but he should ask himself, what is that gain worth, which hath the curse of God upon it? He may be sure, it hath not his blessing, because it is unclean and unjust. For

aught he knows, it may bring a curse upon all his fair profits, and lay the ground of much future unhappiness, if not of ruin. Would he do such things if he were dying? How then can he dare to attempt them, when he knows not but that he may die in the doing them? It is a laudable custom, which some worthy persons have set up, to put one fair sum upon their goods, and to take no other.

With respect to commodities of fluctuating value, the market must be the standard of demand; it being understood, that the market is neither enhanced nor depressed by any known artifice or design.

In all cases of traffick and business, every man oweth justice to himself and justice to others; and it is his duty to wrong neither. A Christian must be an honest man, and will not wilfully, knowingly, and perseveringly, do wrong: and therefore if any person will thus do and continue to do wrong, he cannot deserve the name of an honest man, and much less that of a Christian. The counsels of the wicked only are deceit.

Whenever doubts arise upon any subject of this kind, let the Christian do as the psalmist did—set the Lord always before him. If a man walk closely in the fear of God, he will very rarely through ignorance be guilty of injustice to man.

I believe, further, that a Christian is conscientiously, though not legally bound, to supply all deficiencies in former failures, whenever providence may afford him the power. The Christian seems a very strange one to me, who needs the chain of statutes to bind him to duty; and, therefore, though it may be his case, and the case of many an honest man, to become a bankrupt, but certainly a credit to no man; yet, when his certificate is granted, and he is thereby become clear of the compulsive force of the laws, how can he delay, with a clear conscience, to make good to the utmost

any just losses, which others have sustained by him, as soon afterwards as God shall give him the ability? I have heard of some, and these too were mere men of the world, who, recovering from ruin, had the magnanimity and good sense (for indeed it is both when understood) to discharge all remainders to creditors, and, with those remainders, the interest accumulated upon them: and shall one, who calls himself a believer in Jesus and a child of God, neglect, in a similar case, to do both himself and his Christian profession so beautiful an honor, only by doing strict justice to those unfortunate sufferers, who, by their confidence in his integrity, have every sort of claim to expect it from him? I should doubt the faith of the professor, who could hesitate a moment to do or to own so plain a duty.

There are also some professions which no real Christian can dare to follow. It is not necessary to name them, because they fall under the stroke of one general rule, which every believer in Christ must approve. The trade, the calling, or the gain, which cannot be prayed over, be lived upon in faith, and carried on with thanksgiving, is, like Achan's golden wedge and Babylonish garment, a curse to the owner, and an abomination to the Lord. On the other hand, a small thing, which the righteous hath, is better than great riches of many wicked; and he is much safer and happier too, who, with grace in his heart, hath no money in his purse, than he, who, with thousands of gold and silver, hath the wrath of God along with them.

It is the privilege and duty of a Christian to commit all his present concerns to the favor and blessing of God. He that prays, as well as works, loses no time by his prayers. He that works, but doth not pray, may often expect to labor in vain, as well as in sin, and to bring his affairs to no good end. "Duty

hath much present comfort, and no curse in it;" which consideration alone is worth all the care of a Christian.

CHAPTER XIII.

THAT DUTIES ARE NOT TO BE MEASURED BY THE SUCCESS WHICH MAY FOLLOW THEM, BUT BY THE WORD OF GOD ONLY.

WE have much self-love and self-righteousness in our fallen nature, which cause us to expect success from our spiritual or temporal duties, and to be mortified when we do not find it. Whereas if our minds were perfectly given to the will of God, or in this frail state could be so given, that will would be perfectly our own.

Let not the Christian grieve without hope, if after all his attention to duty in his common concerns, they may not seem to prosper in his hands; for, however they seem, they do prosper for his real good, and especially if his heart and soul are drawn by any disappointments the closer to God. "God's promises are not to be measured by his providences, but his providences by his promises." The Christian therefore must keep in the straight path of duty, and leave it to God to appear faithful in the end, who can at no time be otherwise.

In religious duties, such as prayer and exhortation to his family, the Christian may likewise not always be attended with success; but is he, or can he dare, to stop their performance upon that account? He should remember what God hath appointed him, and

he should pray to do it; but, as to the event, this doth not belong to him. It is God's concern entirely. He may indeed rejoice, when he seeth the hand of God; but he must trust and be doing, when he seeth it not. All will be well with him; and that surely is sufficient for him.

It hath been a sore trial to many faithful ministers, when they have worked hard in God's vineyard and have not sped. But it is scarce necessary to observe to these, that they shall be blessed *in* their labor, if not from it. They feel the comfort of God's promise and presence, or they would go on more heavily still. It is an old complaint, I have stretched forth my hands all the day long to a rebellious and gainsaying people. So Noah was a preacher of righteousness for an hundred and twenty years, while the ark was in building; but it doth not appear that he wrought upon one soul. He was not, however, the less blessed of God. Our Lord's apostles converted more than himself abundantly; and probably for this reason, that his faithful ministers should not afterwards be too much discouraged, when they see not an immediate fruit of their labors.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE DEPORTMENT OF A CHRISTIAN TO OTHERS.

In the first place, as much as lieth in him, the Christian will, if possible, live in peace with all men. That blessed Dove, the Holy Spirit, harboreth not with contention and strife, but loveth peace, concord, and unity; yea, and unanimity too. It is by him that men are

of one mind in their own house, and in the house of God.

As the Christian is no brawler, so, in his habit of life, he cannot be an arrogant, uplifted, conceited, and presuming person; because such an one, in this arrogant world, cannot possibly be free from brawling.

Not being a coxcomb of this world, the Christian hath nothing to plume himself upon for the admiration of others. He knows, that the applause of men will not follow the true servant of Christ, and that, if it did, it is too dangerous a thing for him to meddle with, whose inward selfishness costs him a constant hard labor to subdue it.

He values men, and desires to value them more, as God values them. The family of the faithful are his relations for eternity; and he will spiritually esteem these above all other men. He is to live with them in glory. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples," said Christ, "if ye have love one towards another."

His natural love to his natural friends, is not extinguished by the love of God, but elevated, purified, and increased. He sees more of the real worth of their souls, and is more anxious accordingly for their best interest and immortal welfare. Those among them, who have obtained like mercy with himself, are more especially endeared. Those who want this mercy, have his fervent prayers and compassion, because they want it. When he cannot love for Christ's sake, he will not cease to love them for their own.

Railing and evil speaking, he will cordially detest. The good he knows of others he will rejoice to mention, and the harm (unless for prevention of further harm) he will study to conceal. It is a good rule, never to speak of men's faults to others, till we have first and faithfully spoken of them to the offenders them-

selves. This would prevent a world of mischief and slander, and perhaps save many from persisting in sin.

He will esteem grace, and even common virtues and worth of character, above all manner of riches. A rich wicked man is, in a Christian's eye, somewhat like a body bloated with unwholesome fat and disease; not very pleasant to look upon, but much to be pitied and deplored. O what an evil is fullness of bread, without emptiness of self, and fullness of grace! The Christian will behave to such, with the decency that becomes himself, and with the respect due to their station: at the same time, he cannot be partaker of their sins; nor ought he to miss the opportunity, if Providence give it to him, to set before them better riches than they now enjoy, even God's durable riches and righteousness. Though few of this sort shall be saved, and it is only possible with God to save any of them, yet the Christian will be the more tender and compassionate to them upon this very account. If they are to have their whole portion in this life, should not the anger that may be felt from their insolence and pride, be turned into pity and prayer, since their riches will soon be corrupted, and not an atom of their pomp can follow them.

With regard to the poor, the Christian cannot, as a Christian, be wanting in commiseration or relief, so far as it lies in his power. The affliction of their circumstances will reach his heart most, when his hand can do least to abate it. No real Christian can despise the poor. He that doeth this, is under a worse poverty than theirs. "God hath chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of his kingdom." How then can those among the poor, who are thus blessed, receive contempt from God's children? Or how can the poor at large be treated with insolence and cruelty, when the Lord hath declared, that he will avenge their cause? If a poor man be wicked, he is doubly entitled

to pity; because he hath nothing in this world, and worse than nothing to expect in the world to come. If a poor man be gracious, he is doubly an object of love; because he is now under many trials in the flesh, which the wealthy do not feel, and yet is dear to God, as his own blessed child and future inheritor of his glory.

To men of every rank and station the Christian will endeavor to render their due; Custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor. Let his own situation in this world be what it may, he is the only gentleman in heart, whatever others may seem to be in outward grimace and manners. He is gentle, showing all kindness to all men. This is the golden polish; and without this, the rest is nothing but tinsel.

It will appear from hence, that the Christian school teacheth the most difficult good manners of any in the world. It not only insists upon a decent outside, but leads to the correction of the heart, and to the strictest adjustment of all things into a right order within. No lax morals, no licentious conduct, no ill words, no indecent looks, no, nor yet one evil thought, are tolerated for a moment to the disciple of Jesus Christ. He would be, if he could; and he grieves because he cannot be, in this life, all holiness and perfection. Thus, though no part or cause of his final salvation depends upon what is done by him or what is done in him; yet he desires to abound in all the fruits of faith, which are by Christ Jesus, to the praise and glory of God. And if these things be so, how can any presume to say, "That the doctrines of grace are pregnant with immorality?"

CHAPTER XV.

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONDUCT TO THE TEMPTED AND DISTRESSED IN MIND.

THE members of the same body have a natural care and sympathy for each other; and so have the members of the church of Christ, which is his spiritual body. They cannot know of the sorrow and trials of a brother's soul, without some concern of spirit, or feeling of compassion.

Godly conference and discourse are often rendered the means of comfort and relief. The Lord indeed usually works in this way, that his people may see it to be their greater privilege and duty thus to help each other's faith, and so be joint partakers of his joy. This mutual regard and assistance tend also to unite the flock of Christ, and to make them more and more dear to each other. For want of this, many congregations are like scattered sheep, unaffectionate, disregarded, and careless of their brethren's true happiness and prosperity.

Whatever be the trial or the disorder, the word and promises of God are the appointed help and remedy, which must chiefly be used and applied. If God's word cannot relieve the troubled mind, vain indeed must be the word of man. Besides, experience shows, that this word hath been blessed to the souls of his distressed people, when all other helps have failed.

And as the blessing must descend from above, so all discourses, if not begun, should at least be ended in prayer. Very often in the prayer, the trouble shall be lightened, which the previous discourse did not seem in the least to remove.

There is not a possible case of distress into which a believer can fall, but there is something in the holy

scripture which can meet it. It is the wisdom, then, of a gracious person, in all conferences with the afflicted, to have a store of suitable passages with him or in his mind, that out of it he may be able to draw what may tend, under God's blessing, to remove or to lessen the trial.

Where the body as well as soul is affected, proper remedies must be administered to both, and especially to the latter, that it may be encouraged to support the frailer and the weaker part. If it be a case of sickness, the mind above all things must de attended to; for if that be well, it will not only enable the person to bear the other better, but it will have this noble cordial within, that all shall be well at the last. It is an abominable wickedness in some physicians, that they order all religious discourse out of the chambers of the sick and the dying, lest it should lower the spirits (as they think) and perplex the mind. Are the dying then to be deceived into death, if they are ignorant of God and salvation? Or, if they know God, are they to have no comfort of his word, when they have most occasion for it? It is equally wicked to flatter with life, when death itself is at the very door. I remember a man, who seemed to have some serious impressions from religious discourse, under a near prospect of dying; but when a deceiving physician had assured him of his recovery, he threw away all concerns for heaven, received with disgust any mention of the state of his soul, and was found with cards and idle company in the very evening of that night in which he fell speechless and died. Did not such a physician contribute what he could to the murder of a soul? And is not this the worst because the most lasting cruelty?

Certainly, religious discourses at such seasons should not be thrust in at random, bnt by discreet persons, or (if they can be had) by pious ministers who will neither be too long at one time in their attentions, nor offer what may be unsuitable or impertinent.

When the soul is relieved and consoled, every one knows how much it will sometimes contribute to the health of the body. But, if it be the will of God to remove the party from this world; surely, in the acts of faith and of the comforts which faith brings, it is the more meet to ascend up to another. Why should a Christian go off thoughtless and sad to celebrate the marriage supper in heaven?

All trials and troubles are meant to take out the dross from the Christian. By grace, they have this effect, more or less, throughout his life: And all his distresses likewise are exactly proportioned to his need of them. The last refinement is in death, in which he is perfectly cleansed and purified from every corruption, and removed to enjoy that pure state, which is void of sorrow and sin to all eternity.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONDUCT TO OLD AGE.

It is the Lord's express command, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God." The experience and gravity, the judgment and wisdom, frequently found in old age, demand veneration; and even where these are in some measure wanting, the infirmities and inquietudes of that state call upon people of younger years to abound in compassion towards them.

I know not how it may be with others; but for myself I ever loved the company and conversation of the ancient, preferably to the gay humors of the young, and have been exceedingly delighted at their explanations and informations of circumstances and events, which no books could possibly have given me.

To this day, I cannot meet an aged person, especially if he be infirm, without feeling some kind emotions of heart towards him; and these are always heightened by an anxious pity, if it appear that he hath not yet felt any true concern for himself. All this may be mere nature, it is true; but, however, I do not wish to suppress it.

The gray hairs of the aged call aloud upon them, and through them to all men, Prepare to meet your God. They are remembrancers, at once, of death at hand and of eternity to come.

But the ancient Christian is especially to be considered as a venerable pile, respecting his soul, built up in a long course of grace for the habitation of God himself. The fathers in Christ, having known *him* who is from the beginning, are to be revered, consulted, and (if need be) defended, by the younger brethren upon all occasions.

The apostle, encouraging this tribute of respect to the aged, exhorts, "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father," even when his conduct should be such as is not to be approved. If these have tried grace and long experience, they have also increasing natural weakness and numberless infirmities, by which, it will be no wonder, if in some instances they should be overborne. Could a young man, with a very large portion of grace, change places with them for a day, it is to be doubted, whether he would manage the case any better; though it is not to be doubted, that he would learn extraordinary commiseration in future.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONDUCT TO YOUTH.

A HEATHEN could say, that the greatest respect is due unto children. He meant, that nothing should pass before their sight which might either lead them to vices, or encourage vices in them.

There is no need of gloom in any of the things of God. True seriousness wants it not, and is very foreign to it in its nature. It is particularly unnecessary to indulge this sullen and morose humor of the natural heart (for it is seldom little better) before youth, or children. There is an easy cheerfulness and benevolence, remote from all silly levity, and highly consistent with grace and the best good sense, which ought to reside in a Christian's heart, and which he might exhibit particularly upon occasion to younger persons. They are to be drawn by the cords of a man, that is, with natural affections; and though it is not in man's power to render them truly religious, yet surely religion ought not to appear before them, or any body else, as a poor, miserable, dreadful thing, like a ghost, to frighten them away from her. They should see as well as hear, by the example of real Christians, that the ways of religion (or true wisdom, which is the same thing) are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. Sourness may indeed be found very plentifully in nature; but there is not one single particle of it in all the being or exercise of grace. On the contrary, its tendency is to correct the natural moroseness of the human heart.

The Psalmist gives this mild and gentle invitation: "Come, ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord." But wherefore? That they might see good, and partake of the blessings, which he immediately sets before them.

Our Lord's benevolence to children is above all comment. He gave an example of good will and tenderness, in this respect, which not the greatest and wisest of his disciples can think himself too wise or too great to follow.

The sincerest faithfulness to their souls is consistent with the greatest good nature to their persons; nay, we cannot be truly good natured to them, unless we are faithful. Instruction, even in the best things, may be set before them in an inviting form, without the least deviation from the soundness of truth; and, by a little gracious skill, they may however be led to perceive, how deep an interest and concern they have in them. If God is pleased to second the instruction, by giving them a true sight of themselves; it is a known case, that they will love and honor those, who gave the instruction, as long as they live. And if God doth not bless it to the desired end, yet the piety and well meant kindness of the instructor will not fail of their approbation and respect; for none can choose but love those, who show any real or disinterested regard for themselves. Besides, who can tell, that the seed now sown in early age, though it seem buried and forgotten for many years, may not, in the secret workings of God, be brought forward into life at some future time? There are many instances of persons, who have been blessed by instructions received in younger days, who appeared to have forgotten God, their instructors, themselves, and every thing else that was good for a very long portion of their life, and yet afterwards have been blessed and made happy, through grace, in the very recollection of those things, which, like bread upon the waters, seemed to have been lost, but which were found, and found with great advantage, after many days.

Sin may be checked, nay punished, and yet the sinner be loved. The sinner shall love in return when he perceives, that love occasioned the correction, or rather,

that there would have been no correction but from love. It is the same in a higher case: "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth:" And he will not do this, but for those who are truly his sons.

It is very much their own fault, if there be not great weight in the conduct of parents and friends with young persons and children. These, it should be remembered, hear their words; but they watch their example. If the doctrine and life be the same thing, they will regard the former for the sake of the latter, with reverence: If the preceptor divide them, it is usual for them to despise both and to treat him with censure, or derision into the bargain.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON THE DEATH OF RELATIVES AND FRIENDS.

It was the saying of a man, who had lost his children and all his substance, and who found not one true friend to offer him the least real comfort; "Naked came I into the world, and naked shall I go out: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

This is the resignation of a believer. He refers every thing to the will and work of God; and, having nothing of his own but sin, and nothing to lose by death but sin, all he hath, being by bounty and favor, should be freely offered up to the disposal of the Giver. This consideration indeed, if by itself and alone, would not satisfy him; but there is another which ought, and being set home upon his heart by grace, most certainly will: "All providences, whether pleasant or trying, shall work together for good to them

that love and fear God." When God loves, and loves for the best end, and when God contrives, and contrives only the best means, why is the mind of any Christian overcharged with disquietude and lamentation, with murmuring or sorrow? Doth he not as much as say by it, "Father, not thy will, but my own be done!"

"I have lost a friend," says some anxious mind. But who took that friend? Was it not the God who gave him? And hath he taken more than his own? And, if a pious friend, hath he not removed him to the best advantage? And is it not thy great privilege, after the enjoyment of such a one in this deplorable world, to live and be with him again, not here, but in a better? Besides, Christian, thou hast neither lost thy God, nor thy friend; no, nor yet will they ever lose thee. Thy friend, at the utmost, is but surrendered, not sunk, and shall be found again with advantage. Pray then against the over-strong impressions of carnal sense; for all this is the striving of animal life, of mere flesh and blood, against God; and desire thou to find thy will in the divine will alone. Be silent when it strikes, contented when it denies, thankful when it gives, resigned when it takes away. It is not the gold in the furnace which bubbles and froths upwards, but the dross and the scum.

"I have lost a child," says another: but ask thou, who hath found him? Is it not that gracious Redeemer, who called little children unto himself when upon earth, and who gave them the highest of benedictions? Hath not this child escaped a thousand evils and miseries and sins, which it must have undergone or committed, had it lived longer among the miserable sinners of this world? And doth it not enjoy unutterable happiness with thine own best Friend, with whom also thou thyself hopest to live for ever? And is it worthy of thy love to thy child thus excessively to bemoan

its deliverance from grief, and its possession of peace? Or, rather, is it not the selfish working of thine own too much empassioned heart, which lamenteth its own loss in the flesh, or seeketh its own pleasure more than thy child's happiness, or its own will more than God's? I believe, if thou examinest closely, thou wilt find something of this within thee: but, however, be it what it may, it ought not to be there. It is no fruit of faith; and it will render no comfort to thy soul.

"I have lost a wife or a husband, the very desire of mine eyes, the outward comfort of my life, and my greatest outward support." I would not say, do not feel any grief, but do not grieve beyond measure. When Lazarus died, even Jesus wept. Nature may suffer for its own losses; it may suffer for the losses of others, and in many cases it is decent to feel, and charitable to sympathize; but nature, if alone, is impatient and blind, especially in spiritual things, and makes all its reckonings from the outward senses. To say to nature, that grace gains where she loses, will never comfort her; and to say to persons, who are at any time greatly under the affections of nature, or more under her impressions than under those of grace, that their souls may profit where their bodies have lost, will be dull news, which then at least can scarce find a hearing. The appeal then, must be to grace itself; and nature, if not quite shut out, must at least stand nearer the door. As grace becomes strengthened and quickened, nature will be subdued and quieted, from her tumult and sorrow. And, therefore, under these trials it is, that it may chiefly be seen in believers, how strong or weak their faith is in the Lord. I knew a pious and excellent woman, now with God, who, with as much natural tenderness of heart as ever mortal creature had, and with as much affection for her husband as it is possible for human nature to feel for one every way worthy of her, received the account of his

sickness and death, without a murmur or a groan, and with only some silent tears, which showed the greatness of her natural loss, the sense of her partner's gain, and the strong and lively hope which filled her soul, of living with him again in a blissful eternity. I saw this amiable and beautiful example of the power of grace, and was convinced by it, how much above all sickness and feebleness of nature it can rise, and triumph, and glorify God. Christian, couldest thou have seen this gracious instance as I saw it, it would have taught thee upon fact, how to mourn and bewail the same kind of loss, and how to live upon God; not without a feeling, for that is brutal insensibility, but without being stunned or stupified in the use of grace by the feelings of nature.

But, excellent as this example is, thou and I have a more sure word of testimony to trust in, that we may get the better of our natural losses and sorrows. God, who gathereth all the fathers, will gather us ere long to the fathers in his glory. If our relatives, our dearest relatives, be dead as to this world, they now thank God that they are so; and we may be reminded of the promise of our gracious Saviour, which assures us, that, respecting our souls and the souls of all the faithful, they never shall, they never can, so much as see or taste of death.

Why then should we sorrow, as those who have no hope? We ought to be ashamed of our selfish grief, and to beseech of God, that he would at least turn it into tranquil resignation, if not into praises and joy. God hath wonderfully supported his people in all their extremities; and, if thou art one of them, why not thee? The youngest child may claim his father's bounty and blessing, though he may not enjoy so large a portion as the first-born. Trust then in the Lord; and intreat him to still in thy heart all the passionate and perplexing tempests of disordered nature.

The intended effect of these solemn dispensations to thyself is, to wean thee from time, and to set thy face towards heaven. There thou hast many friends indeed, and one great Friend above all, who can never be lost; nor can the others, when met, be separated from thee again. They are thy friends, in that holy and unchanging region, not for such a shadow of a moment as thy time is here, but for a blissful and boundless eternity. With what transport shalt thou, one day, ascend to them; with what ecstacy will they all unite to receive thee! the very foresight of this joy throws into contempt all the poor affairs of this world. But O what shall the possession do! Could the possibility of descending again to earth, as earth now is, enter the views of the saints in glory, it would throw a damp into heaven itself, and beggar their unspeakable joys. And yet this is almost, if not quite, the wish and desire of every one who murmurs at the departure of Christian friends; or who would, if they could, bring their souls back again into clay.

It was a noble saying of one, over a dear departed friend, "there he lies," says he, "and with him all my worldly comfort; but yet, if the moving a straw would bring him to life again, without the will of my God, I would not be the mover of that straw for a thousand worlds."

My fellow-Christian, mayest thou be like-minded; and, instead of too much bewailing the departure of friends to heaven, let it be thy life of faith and preparation to follow them thither, that thou mayest enjoy, together with them, their and thy common great portion, the everlasting inheritance of the saints in light.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE RECOLLECTION OF THIS THIRD PART IN PRAYER TO GOD.

O MY heavenly Father, when I calmly look back upon my conduct to others in this world, and consider how sadly I have failed in all my known duties to men, against thy holy word and against the peace of my soul, I am humbled to the dust before thee. I have nothing to say for myself, but, with thy prophet, Unclean! unclean!

I have not loved my country as I ought, because I have not prayed for its best welfare as I ought. Intent enough I have been upon its vain glory, its outward pomp, its carnal dignity, and its carnal prosperity; but O how little have I been earnest with thee for the greatest of all blessings, that religion and piety might flourish in the land, without which no true happiness or welfare can be found.

I humbly implore thy blessing upon my sovereign, his family, and his government; beseeching thee to grant, with all outward good, the inward mercies of thy grace, and, in thy due time, the life for evermore. Pardon me also for any failures of my duty on this account.

In obeying those, whom thy providence hath set over me, O teach me to see how I may best obey thee, and glorify thy goodness for a just government, good laws, and all the liberties I enjoy. If those in authority seem to fall into errors (for what man is he that sinneth not) keep my tongue from reviling, and direct my heart into praying for them, that thy wisdom may rectify what human ability could not apprehend or foresee. Deliver me from sedition and selfishness,

from all the evils of political passion and resentment; and give peace, I beseech thee, in my time, O Lord!

Enable me to conduct myself towards thy church, thy ministers, and all who profess to know thee, so as to give no just cause of offence in any thing to any man. I pray thee to heal all divisions among thy children, which may bring sad and deep reproach on thy gospel, or lay dismal snares and stumbling blocks in the ways of men. O that they might love and pity each other, considering what infinitely tender pity and love thou hast manifested for them.

Help, O help me to fill up all my relations in life to thy honor and glory, and forgive me in the numberless instances wherein I have failed. Let the blood of of Jesus cleanse me from all my sins to others; and do thou forgive as thou hast enabled me to forgive, all their transgressions against myself. Grant me larger measures of grace in the days to come, that I may praise thee more and more throughout my whole life and conversation, and thus live and die to the edification of others, and above all to thy glory.

Keep me from all unreasonable and faithless grief, when thou art pleased, with equal wisdom and goodness, to remove the friends of my heart, or the outward comforts of my life. Enable me to give them up without reserve to thee, knowing that no good thing shall be lost either for them or myself, but that all things shall work together for our mutual, our real, our everlasting good.

Having these hopes, help me to be more and more purified from all uncleanness of flesh and spirit, and to endeavor even to perfect holiness in thy faith and fear. Lord, I am a feeble worm, and of mine own self can do nothing that is good. O do thou therefore work in me to will and to do of thy good pleasure, that I may neither be barren or unfruitful in thy word or work among the children of men. Help me

to bear wrongs patiently, to speak every truth meekly, to carry as much as possible my whole conduct unblameably, with respect to others, that thy holy name may be exalted and they themselves be encouraged to seek the way of thy salvation.

O Lord, I give up myelf, all I have and all I am, into thy blessed protection; beseeching thee to do for me and for mine, in all respects and at all times, exceeding abundantly above all that I can ask or think, for the sake of Christ Jesus, my Lord and my God; to whom, with thee, O Father, and thee, O blessed Spirit, three persons in one, and the same Jehovah, be all honor, grace, and glory ascribed, both now and for evermore. Amen.

Acme
Bookbinding Co., Inc.
100 Cambridge St.
Charlestown, MA 02129

BV4891.S3 1838
The Christian remembrancer :
Andover-Harvard
3 2044 077 903 581